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THE ARETHUSA.



VOL. I.

LONDON :
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THE
ARETHUSA.

A NAVAL STORY.

BY CAPT. CHAMIER, R. N.

AUTHOR OF "BEN BRACE," "LIFE OF A SAILOR," &c.

"She is a vessel tight and brave,
As ever stemmed the dashing wave,
Her men are staunch to their fav'rite launch,—
Huzza! for the Arethusa."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1837.

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THE ARETHUSA.

CHAPTER I.

A spoiled Child.

“COME hither, Walter,” said Sir Hector Murray, “and listen to the advice of your father. Few years are left me before, according to the course of nature, I shall be swept from the living; and now that the infirmities of age begin to press upon me, I feel that I ought not to reckon upon a much longer continuance here. Listen to me then, and be attentive! it is the duty of youth to regard the monitions of age, and those who scoff at grey hairs may find an early and a disgraceful end. Alas! that the seeds of depravity should have already developed themselves in a boy—a mere

child—an inexperienced youth of fourteen ! I question whether it would be possible to produce a worse instance than is seen in you of a mis-spent youth. Many parents,” continued Sir Hector, “ would rebuke you angrily ; I shall endeavour by kindness to command your affection. I would have you led by your love, not driven by your fear of me : he who is dreaded is seldom esteemed, and no father would like to hear the forced grief of his son as he lay on his death-bed.”

Sir Hector paused to observe the effect that his remarks had produced on his son. Walter maintained a sullen silence, and did not even look at his father : his attention seemed rather to be engrossed by the various articles of the dessert, than in listening to his father’s serious advice.

Sir Hector eyed his son, not in bitterness, not in wrath, but in pity : it was evident that his earnest remonstrance had failed to produce any effect on the moody boy. The baronet had ever maintained towards his son an affectionate demeanour : from him had never

fallen one word of disgust ;—his mildness, his evenness of temper,—his love of his only son, the inheritor of his large fortunes,—had been the astonishment of his friends. The father eyed his boy, and a deep, deep sigh escaped him. Walter looked up suddenly ; he met his father's glance, and hung down his guilty head.

“ Walter,” began the father, “ you are now past fourteen years of age, and although you have long since been able to distinguish between right and wrong, you have not the power, the strength of mind, to choose the one and to reject the other. I have heard from your master, who has just expelled you from his public establishment, that, in spite of all his care and all his attention, you disregarded his advice, you spurned his authority, you excited his pupils to rebellion ; that in your play-hours, even those amusements which of themselves are sufficiently exciting to the schoolboy were flat and insipid to you without the stimulus of gambling ; that from your greedy disposition for money, and your wish to overreach your associates, you had not only risked your own

money, but had endeavoured to win theirs in a manner not strictly honourable. Walter, this was not the worst of the complaints urged against you; there were others which, considering your youth, I can scarcely credit. You were expelled, not for ignorance, not for idleness, not for swindling, not for breaking through all restraint,—but—Heaven! that my old eyes should ever have read the word from the pen of that excellent man — for *theft*! As long as you live,—ay, you may well start, Walter,—as long as you live, that stain, that blot will never be erased from the book of your life. Into whatever society you go, some babbling boy will remember the deed and the punishment, and you must learn to bear with meekness the whispered reproach that Walter Murray was expelled from H—— for theft.”

“He will not live,” replied Walter with a slow, steady voice, “to repeat it, father.”

“I fear,” replied his father, “that darker deeds will follow in due time; but I must not look too gloomily upon the future. I acknowledge that no little part of this blame most justly falls

upon myself. Your mother, just before she was snatched from me in the pride and beauty of life, warned me of your disposition. My love for you disposed me to view as boyish tricks what have since ripened into crimes ; and the first false step on the inclined plane of vice has been followed with such impetus, that you have nearly slid into irretrievable ruin before you were aware of the gulph into which the smooth, deceitful descent has urged you.—Walter ?”

“ Well,” replied the boy, starting ; “ did you speak, sir ?”

“ Did I speak !” repeated the old man, his eyes lighting up into a half-passion ; then instantly relapsing into their wonted calmness, he continued,—“ I spoke of your faults and your follies. You were listless when your poor old father was by kindness endeavouring to palliate them, or half to bear the reproach himself. The folly of the law has made you my heir,—the estates settled on your mother’s marriage devolve upon her child, and I have no power to alienate them, or I should be half inclined to try what might be effected

by placing the fortune into hands that would only relinquish it when you altered your behaviour."

"Thank you, father," said the boy, "for the kind disposition you show to make me wise by making me a beggar. Have you any more to say? for I have promised to meet one or two of my friends to-night."

"Yes, Walter, I have much to say, and to-night you certainly do not meet those friends. To-night we must resolve what profession you are to follow — how your education is to be conducted; for I will have no idler in my house, whose whole existence is to be a burthen to himself and all those around him. The fortune I have earned was not acquired without much toil, much thought, much trouble: to that very toil and trouble I owe the happiness I now experience in all but the conduct of my son. The day was too short for my occupation; the flying hours never lagged upon my hands; constant employment was but a pleasing prelude to my evening's domestic comfort; and in my office and in my

room I learned that true happiness is not to be found, but to be made."

"I find just the contrary," said the saucy boy; "for in this room I have no happiness, and out of it I sometimes do find pleasure. To be sure, I have had some delight here to-night, for I fancy you cannot send me back to school again."

"If your mother had not been as virtuous as she was fair," said his father, "I should much doubt your being my son; for there does not seem to run one kindred drop of blood in our veins."

"What's bred in the *bone*, father, you know, ——" and the youngster sat back and laughed.

"Silence, sir!" said the old man; "your remark is a sufficient rebuke without a continuance of it; for had I acted with the firmness—the duty of a parent, the son would never have dared to make such a remark, at such a time, or under such circumstances. Had I exacted the respect due to me when you were younger, I should not have been insulted in my old age."

“ I certainly do believe,” replied Walter, without the slightest hesitation, “ that all my faults and follies are owing to your neglect of me. But what is the use of talking any more about it ?—what is done cannot be undone. What do I care for the reverend gentleman’s pen or for his expulsion ! I shall be a soldier—I shall go into the cavalry ; for I’m not inclined to use my own legs more than is requisite, and I’m very fond of riding ; besides which, I shall have plenty of money ; and therefore am not the lad to be placed on a high stool to dangle my legs, or to ink a desk : so that is settled, father ; and now I may go, I suppose ?”

“ Stay, sir,” replied the old man,—“ stay ; and since you have taught me my duty, I shall not hesitate to enforce it. Stay, sir, I repeat ; and let me find that I have been mistaken, and that you are ready to follow my advice. True it is that your mother’s kindness to her only child, whose wayward disposition was never checked, but each wish gra-

tified almost before it was expressed, has led to this unfortunate end : but there is still a hope that you may be reclaimed,—that religion, affection, duty, may all be appealed to with effect. Walter, your conduct to me is more like that of an insolent, discharged servant, than of a son to his only parent ! Your conduct is more like that of a hardened offender, than of a youth of fourteen who has received in his mind the germ of religion, although the flower was destroyed in its bud ! I need not say how disreputable has been your conduct. Conscience must warn you that your behaviour cannot go unpunished, and I know that you bear about you the reproach which the last remaining spark of honour will still show to your debased mind. Come, my son, let me wean you by kindness from the sad path into which you have entered. For my sake, Walter — for the honour of our name, for your own reputation, cease this idleness of behaviour ; devote your time to study, occupy your hours in some useful pursuit : that which

has passed shall then be forgotten ; and when you make the promise of amendment, you shall receive my pardon and my blessing."

The father paused, and fixed his eyes upon his son. The warm, affectionate tone in which he had couched the last remark had no visible effect upon this misguided youth, who seemed to consider the whole rebuke as very unseasonable after dinner, and who was most anxious it should come to a conclusion, and that he should be released from his parent's presence. In this he was mistaken : his father, as if awakened from a dream, had found, when nearly too late, the extent of his son's follies, and he resolved at once to use every effort to retrieve the boy's character and his own honour.

Walter answered sullenly, that his father was never satisfied ; that he was the head of his class ; that whenever the reverend gentleman had written, he had never been punished for his lessons ; and that no boy his junior in age was his senior at school. " What more do you want ?" he continued. " I am sent to school to

learn: if I am so taught that I retain my place, upon what ground can you censure me?"

"Upon the ground of dishonesty—dishonour. Walter," replied the father, "you are quick—you are clever: but you are idle; and 'Idleness,' as you may have written——"

"'Is the root of all evil,'" continued Walter. "Who taught me to be idle?—my mother. When I was anxious to sit down and read, who told me not to mope all day over a book, but to go out and take exercise as other boys did?—my mother. Who used to complain of my pale face and sunken eye?—my mother. Well, I left off study and took to exercise; and now I am told that my idleness has occasioned my dishonour! As I said before, there is no satisfying some people."

The father during this speech had risen from his chair, and walked quickly up and down the room in evident agitation; and when his son had concluded this tirade of abuse against his mother, the old man stood before him. "Answer me, Walter," he began: "When your poor dear

mother lay upon her bed of death, — when, as the last beams of the setting sun rested upon your face, she took from her bosom a locket and hung it round your neck, — did she not say, ‘Walter, Walter, I fear I have been too blind a mother; but as you hope that my soul may rest in peace and quietness above, I implore you, every morning, when you have lifted your voice to Heaven, to look at this last gift, and steadily to determine that throughout the day no error shall be committed which shall blanch the cheek with shame, or force the blood which shall arise as a witness on your face to give evidence against you.’ You remember that even at the last moment of her life, when I knelt beside the bed and moistened her cold hands with the burning tears which started from my eyes, — ay, after she had blessed *me*, — she blessed you and bade you *remember* her last words. If now you have one spark of honour left in you, draw that locket from your breast, and say that one word, ‘*remember* ;’ then shall I have hopes that this current of lost affection may be turned into its proper channel, and the fountain which has

been muddled by your faults may yet fall in clear drops upon the earth. I ask you—I command you, Walter, to take that locket in which is the miniature of your mother, painted after the hand of death had approached her, and as you look at those sunken eyes, promise me to amend.”

A deep flush covered the face of Walter—a blush of shame and of regret. His father saw it and cherished it as a good omen—as a proof that he had at last touched the chord which would bring harmony and contentment to all—a proof, he thought, that every sentiment of honour had not been blasted by the withering breath of idleness. He stood before him, and as he watched the blush becoming more and more faint, he said, as he fondly took his hand, “Comfort me, dear Walter, by this one act of obedience, from which I argue the greatest good?”

The boy remained silent and made no sign of compliance.

“Come, Walter, it is the only request I have made—and which I now only make as conducive

to your own happiness. I know you always wear it about you."

"I have not got it now about me," said the boy, feeling for it:—"I know I have not got it on."

"I thought you promised your mother, Walter, as you knelt by her side, never to part with it, and that you would always wear it? Tell me," said the father, as a sudden thought seemed almost to check his speech, "what have you done with it, and where is it? Walter, do not tell me a falsehood, lest you make me hate as well as despise you. What have you done with it?"

"Sold it," answered Walter.

"Sold it!" ejaculated his father with emotion:—"speak, Walter, can that be possible?"

"Yes: one of the boys, a friend of mine, persuaded me to sell it, and I did sell it."

"Gracious God!" exclaimed the father, "do I hear rightly? or has some sudden visitation of Providence fallen on me—some affliction unparalleled overtaken me? Leave me, Walter,—leave me, that I may not curse you—that I

may not by a hasty word render myself unhappy as you have made me to my last hour."

Walter availed himself of the order, and, rising from his chair, walked hastily to the door; and before his father could summon back his natural affection to recall his child, he heard the street-door close violently, and was aware that the last spark of duty had been quenched in his son.

He threw himself on his chair, and thus allowed his thoughts to wander back to happier days, endeavouring to trace what errors he had committed that a gracious Providence should have cursed him with a disobedient child. "Let me see," he began: "from the time I left school, I was assiduous in my duties; I toiled for those who employed and who paid me—I never wasted an hour on myself which belonged to them—I gained their confidence, I was rewarded by being admitted into partnership with them. The wealth of other countries soon enriched me; I became a wealthy man. I did not niggardly hoard it; there is not a public charity

in the metropolis to which I do not subscribe. I never injured the weak, or denied the poor ; and as far as erring nature can control itself, I have controlled myself. I passed the chair as mayor of the metropolis ; I was made a baronet by my sovereign.—This is the flattering side of the picture : let's see the reverse. Have I returned sufficiently grateful thanks for all the blessings I have received ? —have I not at times been swollen with a purse-proud conviction of my wealth ?—have I not envied others ?—have I not forgotten my God in the remembrance of myself ? Yet can I place my hand to my heart and declare that my principal sins must be those of omission, not of commission. My prayers have not been heard : for daily, nightly, have I prayed that my son might grow up in wisdom and in honour ; that the finger of shame might never be pointed at him ; that he might not squander his wealth ; that he might remember the last moments of his mother. Perhaps," continued the old man as he mused,—"perhaps my greatest error in life was my marriage :

I was too old—I was fifty and more, and then I could not expect to see my son fairly launched in life. To whom can I now leave him? (for I feel this last blow has indeed done more to ruin my mind and my health than ten years of increasing age)—to an uncle who despises him—to a guardian he hates. My estates, the hard-won earnings of my youth and manhood,—my worldly treasures, amassed with such toil,—will fill the pockets of the gamester, render the rogue prosperous, and the villain affluent!—Ay, that was an error when my child was made independent of the parents! for tattling boobies are sure to teach a boy that he is independent, and that, come what may, he cannot be injured in his prospects. What can I do now? Alas! what charms has this once peaceful home to me! I dread to look upon the only human being who should regard me as his best friend, his protector, his parent. How my head throbs, how awfully cold I feel! Surely, surely, this last act of my son has stricken me with an arrow as poisoned as that of death. It must not be—I must rouse myself

to my duty ! Henceforth kindness is useless—I must be determined and resolute !”

He rose from his chair and rang the bell. It was answered by an old faithful servant, who had contributed his share in spoiling Walter, and who now stood before the master he had served for thirty years.

“ Where is my son, Benjamin ?” said old Murray, as if he listened for the echo ; “ where is my son ?”

“ I do not know, Sir Hector,” replied Benjamin ; “ but I heard the door close about half an hour since.—But perhaps he is in the drawing-room. Shall I see, Sir Hector ?”

“ Do. If he is there, tell him I *desire* to speak to him.”

“ Something in the wind,” thought old Benjamin as he closed the door. “ Never heard master *desire* any man to do anything : another scrape, I’ll be bound. How pale the old gentleman looked !”

“ He is not there, nor in the house,” said the servant as he returned ; and then observing Sir Hector wiping a tear from his eyes,

he approached with the freedom of a faithful, long-tried servant, and said,

“I don’t think you are well this evening, Sir Hector. Shall I send for the doctor?”

“What makes you think so?” asked Sir Hector, endeavouring to force a smile upon his countenance.

“You look so pale, sir, and you do not speak as you did. Lord defend us,” continued Benjamin starting, “if master has not fallen down dead in his chair!” He flew to the bell and rang a peal which convinced the footman something was wrong; for, in Sir Hector’s summons for his servants, his hand never betrayed that eager haste, that sharp command, which may even be conveyed by a bell-pull.

The doctor was sent for, the house was alarmed, and perhaps Sir Hector might have died, verifying the old saying—“Too many cooks,” &c. had not the old housekeeper declared it was only a faint, and soon restored animation. When, however, the doctor arrived, he found his patient in a strange, unusual state: there was no reason for the excitement under

which he laboured, and which gradually increased ; nor could the medical gentleman glean from Sir Hector one word of the cause of this sudden indisposition. The requisite medicines were prescribed ; soothing draughts were administered ; the lancet gleamed over his arm ; and by midnight, Sir Hector, watched by Benjamin, the most faithful and honest of attendants, was in a quiet slumber, his features pale but placid, his mind and his body apparently at rest.

In the mean time, Walter had no sooner quitted his father's house, than he forgot the last words of his parent, or only remembered them with scorn, as if a curse was a matter of any consequence : indeed, he rather wished the idea would occur a little oftener, so that he might be dismissed from the long, prosing lecture which old heads think proper to inflict upon lads of right spirit, who only do what young men ought to do. As he walked to Drury-Lane Theatre, where he had appointed to meet one or two of his companions, he turned over in his mind his future prospects. “ My father,” he began, “ can't last long : and poor, good old soul, it

will be a happy release *for him* ; he is not fit for this world. Wealth is of no use to him, except to patch up an old cottage on the estate for some lazy, lurking scoundrels, who have persuaded him they are honest, and that circumstances have reduced them. By Heavens ! wait only until I 'm of age, and I 'll clear them out, root and branch, every mother's son of them. I 'll have no lazy vermin to fatten on the estate, and it *must* come to me. 'Then there 's that old sanctified-looking hypocrite, Benjamin : thirty years has he been gleaming the rich fields of harvest, in both town and country. Out he goes, stock and fluke, as that young midshipman used to say. 'Faith, I'll have no old chronieler of my theft !—That 's an awkward word ; but it 's not so bad as it sounds. I did not *steal*, I only borrowed the money without the owner's consent—and certainly with not much idea of repaying it : but who does pay ?—only your stupid fellows, who talk about the pleasure of being out of debt merely because their credit 's so bad that they cannot get into it. Now, if it only would

please my father to have a sharp fit of the gout, I could get through a fortnight's fun without interruption. But frolics cost money, and with that I do not like to part, excepting when I have borrowed it as I did at school ; and then perhaps the sooner the evidence of the fact is smothered, the better. It's not the act, but the discovery of it, which engenders shame.—Hulloa ! here already ! I must have walked fast. But I remember hearing my old father say, that people in love or in thought always keep their heads down and go along at a quick pace.”

“ Half-price yet ? ” said Walter as he neared the man in the box-office.

“ Yes, sir,” said he.

“ Can't you let me in at the gallery price ? for the play must be nearly over, and I have only two shillings about me.”

“ No, sir,” replied the man, “ quite impossible ; for I should have to pay it myself, as the check-taker above would have the tally against me.”

“ It's very hard,” replied Walter : “ here am

I, a boy from school, only twelve years old, and I shall have to walk back again."

"Very hard indeed, sir," said the man; "but much harder upon me if I was obliged to pay for your pleasure."

"Oh!" said Walter, finding he could not succeed by his falsehood, "I have the money: how odd I should have forgotten that I put it in my pocket!"

He paid, received the leaden check, and was not so quick in his departure but that he heard the box-office man say, "Well, he is young enough surely to have lied like a tooth-drawer."

This made no impression upon Walter — he was quite accustomed to such expressions applied to himself; and fortunately enough, one would suppose, for the nursing of that talent the very development of which the money-taker had observed, the farce just begun was "The Liar," to which Walter lent a very attentive ear, and certainly profited by the example, although he scouted the moral. His companions, two young lads about sixteen or seventeen, had

joined him, and seemed to cheer him on by hazarding an unfounded remark, that *Young Wilding* beat him hollow, and that it would require years for Walter to surpass his model.

“ I think,” said Gordon, the elder of the two, “ Murray might give *Jeremy Diddler* a lesson in the art of filching.”

“ Yes,” said Hammerton, who was a midshipman ; “ every finger in his hand is a fish-hook, and it will be a sharp craft that will turn to windward of him.”

These remarks, and about a dozen others, were unnoticed by Walter, who watched the play with the greatest attention, and who smiled with satisfaction whenever the actor of ‘ *Young Wilding* ’ came out successful from any of his monstrous untruths ; but when at the close the liar was likely to be unmasked, he turned round to Gordon and said, “ Dreadfully dull this ! let’s be off.”

“ Ah !” said Gordon, “ I suppose you have profited all you can, and now for the practice !”

“ Let’s top our booms,” said Hammerton, “ and steer away for an oyster-house.”

“No, no,” said Murray; “let’s take a turn in the saloon.” This was agreed to, and they forthwith repaired to that rendezvous of vice, which, in the time of which we write, had no equal in England. All that could display a contempt of decency, was here congregated and exhibited. The young midshipman, who had been three years afloat, and who had associated with these specimens of frail mortality at Portsmouth or Plymouth, and who had seen them by hundreds as they were mustered into the ship to which he belonged, looked carelessly on the scene. Gordon was afraid to be thought less manly than his inferior in age, but superior in worldly knowledge; Hammer-ton re-echoed his sayings; whilst Walter, inspired as it were by the low wit and ribaldry of the cockpit, treasured each remark in his mind, and wondered how people could remain on shore when such a field for improvement was open for them afloat. Fortunately, however, an uncle of Gordon came into the saloon: the young man instantly declared that he must depart; and Walter and Hammerton

being indisposed to part company with him, the three adjourned to an oyster-room, and there passed a jovial hour or two.

It is alarming how, with increased rapidity, the novice in guilt falls from the insecure pinnacle of virtue to the lowest depths of crime ! Few, if any, fly from top to bottom without touching the steps ; but some, and many there are, who take long strides, and hardly rest for a moment on any one of the different gradations. Walter from one false step at school, (a falsehood, backed up by circumstances all equally false,) made his first descent. His lie was believed ; he saw he might escape detection ; he descended to meanness, selfishness, and finally to theft. His only chance of restoration to any character was in the navy, for there the smallest prevarication, the slightest meanness is instantly discovered and punished ; the active scenes of life, the daily perils, the constant employment, the ever-watchful eye over the youngster's conduct, may reclaim the most vicious. In Hammer-ton, for instance, all that was noble and generous

could be traced ; in Walter there was nothing but selfishness and deceit ; whilst in Gordon might be seen the eagerness of youth to catch at anything, however trivial, which emanated from the straightforward seaman, and even to relinquish his classical dictionary for the more questionable vocabulary of the cockpit. The straightforward manner of a youngster who has been in a well-disciplined ship, saving always that the language is not the most polished, would be aped by half the boys of the public schools who were his superiors in every accomplishment as well as in age.

Before leaving the theatre, Walter fixed upon the oyster-room they were to visit. It was agreed to, and he was seen moody for a moment ; he then resumed his gaiety. It was a drizzling rainy night ; the young companions called a hackney-coach, and it was remarked by Hamerton how excessively civil Murray had grown, for he insisted upon handing his friends in. Their astonishment, however, soon gave way to a cheer of disgust, when, on the coach stopping, Walter, who was nearest the door

which was opened, jumped out, exclaiming, "The last out pays for the coach!" and he rushed into the house, leaving Hammerton to pay. He was a generous lad, and merely remarked when they were seated, that Murray had taken advantage of a start of wind and made a stretch to windward of him.

CHAPTER II.

*How to obtain a Parent's Blessing and a Parent's Cash.—
A Midshipman's first Departure from Home.*

It is needless to comment upon the neglect of Sir Hector in regard to his son. From the single fact that a boy of his age should have been allowed to visit the theatres unprotected, it will be easily conceived by the reader how completely Walter had assumed a right to be his own master, and how scornfully he rejected any advice. The assumed gravity of the parent was now useless ; and it would have required more firmness of character, more energy of mind than Sir Hector possessed, to repossess himself of his lost authority.

The hopeful youths mentioned in the last

chapter, after having enjoyed some few dozens of that living nutriment which the bravery of men has converted into food without first sentencing it to death,—and thereby in this instance confuting the definition of man, that he cooks his victuals,—and having imbibed long and deep potations of that bitter, muddy mixture called porter, and finished by some more congenial beverage in the shape of grog, they separated for their respective homes.

Walter attempted to shirk his portion of the payment by proposing the alternative of heads or tails,—the money being under his hand and artfully kept on the exact balance so that it might be turned against his adversary whichever he happened to call. Foiled in this, for both his friends seemed to know his propensities, he walked home although it rained, and called to his remembrance all the lively anecdotes of Hammerton, who had not only read the title-page of life, but had turned over some of its most interesting pages. In his idea, the sea offered the best profession for a boy of desperate character ; for with all Walter's faults,

he was no coward: he was a contradiction to the received notion that guilty people are always timid, as the Swedes are a living lie upon the wisdom of the world, who, ever since the first tippler was known, have declared that all drunkards are dishonest; the inhabitants of Dalecarlia being proverbially the greatest habitual drunkards and the most honest race in Europe. Walter's idea of a hussar dress gave way in his opinion before the white patch of a midshipman's collar, and the long swagging sword lost in comparison with the neat dirk.

On his arrival at home, Benjamin opened the door; a very unusual circumstance, for Benjamin was no night-watcher,—his toil ceased when Sir Hector retired to rest, and the baronet was a great lover of early hours and beauty sleep.

“What keeps you out of bed, Benjamin?” said Walter: “is it the praiseworthy employment of watching my return and of tattling to my father?”

The old servant looked with an eye of as-

tonishment at the question, and answered, that he was not accustomed to such mean acts, but that he was up in consequence of the severe illness of Sir Hector, who, he said,—and this he added with that peculiar voice which real fear causes,—“ will, I apprehend, never recover.”

“ Nonsense !” said Walter ; but it was expressed as if the news was much too good to be true.

“ No nonsense, sir, I assure you,” replied the servant : “ when you left him, he was seized with a giddiness, and fainted.”

“ Was he drunk ?” asked the unfeeling boy.

“ Not so much,” replied Benjamin, “ as you appear to be. I think, Master Walter, you had better go as quietly to bed as possible. Master has fallen asleep, and the doctors have desired him to be kept quiet. As your room is over his, perhaps you will pull your boots off here, and I will get you your slippers ?”

“ I shall do no such thing,—give me a light :” and upstairs walked the hopeful boy, purposely making a noise, in order, as he said, that his father might know when he returned without

asking his spy; and there, forgetful of those duties his mother had inculcated, he threw himself upon his bed, unmindful of the thanks he owed his Creator for the life of the day past, and which he had so unprofitably—so disgracefully spent.

The morning dawned; Sir Hector was better and desired to see his son. He was slow in attendance, and then appeared like a boy who knew he deserved a rebuke, and expected it. He found his father better than he even believed, and was agreeably surprised to find that so far from a rebuke, his kind-hearted parent extended his hand, and seemed rather by his manner to ask forgiveness than to censure a fault.

“Come close to me, my boy,” said Sir Hector, “for I am not strong enough for any great exertion: a night’s sickness does more to weaken this old frame than a month’s indisposition does to yours. I am very anxious about you, Walter. I should like, since now your character——But I will not say a word about that; I shall forgive you the instant you amend, and which for your own comfort and

respectability will, I know, be shortly done. Remember, Walter, you inherit my title—my fortune—my name. I would not have that disgraced by the son which has been respected in the father. I must place you in more stirring scenes, and this war, I think, offers a prospect of employment. You are too young for the army, to which last night you seemed to give the preference. It requires long study and much steadiness,” continued Sir Hector, a slight smile passing his lips, “to make either a clergyman or a lawyer; and your disposition does not much fit you for the former, and the latter requires too much mental labour. Now the sea, I think,—although Heaven knows I shall part with you with much sorrow!—would suit you better than any other; and if you are so inclined, I think I could get you into a comfortable ship with an old friend of mine, who will be as considerate as the service permits, and who will be kind and attentive to you. I have selected a man of mild, gentlemanly manners, to whom I will write by to-night’s post: his ship is at Portsmouth, and before a week

you may be afloat. It is no small trial for a father to part with his only son when he has the means of making him comfortable and respectable without a profession ; but I never liked idle men,—they are always pests, and mostly vicious. Think of it, Walter, and give me your answer.”

“ I am ever willing,” replied the artful boy, “ to follow your advice : I admit I have done wrong, and I am willing to retrieve my character.”

Sir Hector grasped his son’s hand : “ God bless you ! boy ; the acknowledgment of an error is the first step towards sincere repentance ; and from the admission you have just made, I argue that your day of dishonour is past : henceforth I shall see a son who will add honour to my name ; and I trust that the profession into which he is about to enter will know nothing of the past, and have reason to be proud of the conduct of Sir Hector Murray’s boy. Enough of this for the present. You were late last night, Walter ; where did you go ?”

“ To the theatre, my dear father : I hardly

knew where I was going when I left the house, but decided upon the play to cheer me up."

"Did you meet any one you knew?" asked Sir Hector.

"Yes, father; I met Hammerton, a midshipman, and Gordon, an old schoolfellow of mine."

"Hammerton?" said Sir Hector, musing; "is he a Somersetshire man? for an elderly gentleman of that name who has seen better days resides on my estate in that county. I think I remember that when he became suddenly impoverished, one of his sons was sent to sea, on board the Tribune, Captain Barker. In that ship I intend to place you: Barker is an old friend of mine, and I shall write to him this evening. Before you leave me, Walter, in order that I may get a little repose, let me again tell you how you comfort me by your promise to amend. I shall earnestly pray to God to strengthen the laudable resolution. Good-b'ye for the present."

Sir Hector had no occasion to say good-b'ye twice. Out came Walter, saying, "A precious

good business this !—got my own way once in my life without opposition, and a blessing to boot. If I thought blessings accompanied by some money were so easily obtained, I should be more liberal of my promises. By the bye, it's not a bad time to reap a little harvest." As he said this, he reopened the door and asked his father, who had fallen back on his pillow much exhausted, if he could give him a little pecuniary assistance.

"There is my purse, Walter," said the kind old man : "you have made me so happy, that I cannot be niggardly in regard to anything which contributes to your comfort. Take what you want."

Walter was very quiet in his lightening of the purse ; he merely took two or three guineas, he hardly knew which : but twice after he had opened the purse and replaced it, he weighed it in his hand, and squinted round at his father. He again left the room ; and before the father was asleep, the son, like all idlers in cities, was hunting for pleasure, with a whole day before him, and without the smallest notion as to how

he could kill the long hours between ten o'clock in the morning and six o'clock in the evening. Home was the most hateful of all places to him—he never could feel comfortable near his father, although it has been seen that no parent was ever more indulgent than Sir Hector; yet the miniature of his mother was not entirely forgotten, and he felt every now and then, that if he could repurchase it at a moderate price, he would part with the money to obtain it. Now indeed, as he was about to try the most dangerous of all professions excepting that of a powder manufacturer, some few boyish superstitions crossed his mind, and he began to sum up all he had read about parents' blessings and parents' curses. The excitement of the town—the thoughts of the uniform—the belief that he would shortly be his own master, (an error he had time afterwards sufficiently to acknowledge,) changed a little the general evil current of his thoughts, and on his return he was gratified beyond measure to hear that the letter to Captain Barker had been written and sent.

The recovery of Sir Hector was owing to the pleasure he received from the hope implanted in him that his son was not entirely lost, that the seeds of virtue were not entirely choked by vice, or that his heart was not the barren rock from which nothing good could emanate. The fond belief that Walter might retrieve himself, and the advice of all his friends to send him to sea to be tamed and taught, gave him a gleam of satisfaction through the dark mist of obscurity and gloom. The answer arrived on the third day : the Tribune would be ready in a week, but a fit-out could be obtained in a day. Walter became more anxious as his friendship increased for Hammerton, who gave such a spirited account of battles and prizes, that now it would have been impossible to restrain his curiosity from being gratified. Hammerton had been ordered to return immediately, and Walter thought this a good opportunity of forwarding his own views ; he therefore took him to Grosvenor-square, introduced him to his father, and it was soon settled and arranged that they

were to start together (Sir Hector not being sufficiently recovered to accompany them) in Sir Hector's travelling carriage—for he was particularly anxious that his son should be known as the offspring of a man of fortune, and not a needy adventurer in the wooden walls of old England.

The morning for their departure came, how eagerly hoped by Walter, how bitterly regretted by his father ! The last advice—the last lecture was nearly as follows :

“ Walter,” he began, “ it is a duty a parent owes his child to give him as far as he is able the wisdom of his experience ; but well I know this is a commodity often offered as a gift, but strangely enough never accepted, but always purchased. It is the only thing I know which people young or old will buy ; and they generally pay a very exorbitant price for the article, useless to all but themselves. From the time you embark, you will find yourself one of many, and yet so cautiously watched that you might fancy yourself the only object on board. Lay aside all pride of fortune, otherwise your equals

will despise you, your inferiors will envy you. Envy, Walter, is another word for unquenchable hatred: a man who envies you, will gladly 'see you ruined, and will not be over-nice as to the mode. There is nothing in which poor weak human nature more exults than in trampling on the person it once envied; there is no news more gratifying than the ruin of such a man. Therefore, conduct yourself in such a manner, that whilst you do not debase yourself to the level of those below you, you do not exalt yourself so much above them as to excite their jealousy. Be generous to all to whom you have the power of being generous. Avoid all low coarse expressions: any one may be vulgar,—the difficulty is to excel in suavity of manners; in this your profession have not as yet produced a model which we prefer to ourselves. On no account be quarrelsome: you are young, and if defeated in your first battle with a boy of your own size, but who from exercise had become stronger, you might become fearful of your strength, lose confidence, and become timid. Be foremost in any

danger; but remember, if you have wronged a man, it shows more courage to apologise than to fight. Every one has a certain proportion of brute courage: but that which is the result of cool determination is bravery; that which is done under the sudden impulse of revenge, or when heated by wine or madness, is not courage, but temerity. I remember once in early life seeing a Spanish bull-fight. It was impossible not to admire the cool dexterity and courage of the picadores; but on a sudden, when the animal was infuriated from the fireworks which were struck into it, a half-drunken mule-driver rushed into the arena, imitated the brute in putting his head down and ran unarmed towards the bull. His head went exactly between the horns: he was thrown of course, and would have been trampled on but for the interposition of one of the matadores, who coolly walked up and killed the animal. In this anecdote, Walter, you can distinguish between courage and temerity.

“Never be guilty of falsehood—the slightest deviation from truth is to be censured. I speak

not of *embellishing* an anecdote, in invention to convey a moral, in wit to excite gaiety : I speak of the careful abstraction of a part in order to disguise the whole, or the making addition to a circumstance to give it more weight than it deserves. Falsehood which is wilful has no name sufficiently strong in the English language to express its shame ; it is the refuge of the coward, the resource of the mean and the pitiful. I know as you grow up you will be exposed to temptations, to which we poor weak mortals are subject : against these the constant restraint of religion is your best defence. Remember, Walter, the difference of prayer related by an old author. A soldier before a battle made the following appeal to Heaven : ‘ O God, if there be a God, have mercy upon my soul, if I have a soul.’ When this was related to the Bishop of Rochester, that prelate remarked, that so far from its being excusable on the score of its brevity, it was every way objectionable, and better for the soldier would it have been to say : ‘ O God, if in the day of peace I have forgotten thee, forsake me not in the

hour of peril.' The groundwork of religion I trust is still within you ; a year or two will convince you of your faults and your follies, and the reaction will, I hope, be the stronger. But, mistake me not : I would not have you fall into the opposite extreme. ' Be not righteous overmuch,' and never let your pride overstep common sense. Some people tell you that they feel they are of the number of the elect, and that those who are not exactly of their creed cannot be saved. They thus condemn seven hundred and ninety-nine millions, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand who dare to dispute the orthodoxy of one thousand fanatics. When you have performed an action which your conscience tells you is a good one—when you have neither transgressed the laws of God nor those of your country, (and for the latter the punishment is summary,) I tell you not to believe that you cannot be saved unless on any peculiar tenet of faith ; for if you do, you are as unjust to yourself as the one thousand blockheads who have felt their election sure, and thus become prouder than the

proud, and more ambitious than the fallen angels.

“ The good things of this life have been given you with a generous hand ; you are not subject to the misfortunes which press heavily on some who labour for existence. You are neither deformed in person nor deficient in intellect ; you are neither stunted of stature nor short of strength. Be not, therefore, ungrateful for the kindness you have received ; but rather strive by the cheerful discharge of your duty here, to merit a reward hereafter.

“ The time now grows short, Walter, before we part, and perhaps for ever. The distinguished bravery of the man under whose command I have placed you will lead you into dangers and difficulties, and no man can say that *you* are certain to return. On the other hand, old age and perhaps some regret at what lately happened have sapped my health ; but, by the blessing of God, to whom I confidently hold up my hands in earnest hope that my prayer may be granted, we shall meet again.

“Now, Walter, before we part, I have a present to make you ; and let me implore you on no account to part with it. The attention you now pay to me warrants the belief that the words have not been uttered in vain. I have mentioned all on the score of advice excepting the avoidance of drunkenness. It is so ungentlemanly, so filthy, to degrade the man to the level of the beast, that I need not recommend you to avoid a moment’s exhilaration, which is most amply paid for in the sickness, the lassitude of the morrow. I have at a considerable expense, but which I do not grudge, recovered your mother’s locket for you ; how I traced, what I paid for it, I need not say. Here it is, Walter ; and as I place it round your neck, I implore Heaven to protect you, and that whenever through the levity of youth you should be inclined to swerve from the proper course, this locket may attract your attention.

“I am certain, after all that has happened, that you will feel for me as I feel for you, with all the attachment which ought to sub-

sist between parent and child. You will write frequently—indeed, whenever an opportunity occurs,—and do not plead as an excuse the having nothing to say : every act of your life will interest me — every friend you make will be acceptable to me ; and nothing will give me greater satisfaction than the assurance of your captain that you have diligently performed your duty. To my diligence in early life you owe your future prospects ; and those who come after you should have the same excitement to imitate a good example.

“ And now, Walter, as I hear your friend’s knock, and as the carriage is ready, I shall wish you good-b’ye. Benjamin will accompany you ; I have given him the money which is requisite ; your own purse is well filled ; and here is a letter to Captain Barker, begging him to endorse any bill he may think you require. God bless you, my boy, and may Heaven restore you to me ! ”

CHAPTER III.

An Oldster and a Youngster.—Tempting sketch of life afloat.—A Senior in command.—A Post-captain's Authority.

WALTER hurried from the library, inwardly rejoicing that his father's admonitions had terminated. The lecture was over, the purse was stored, the letters of credit were pocketed, and Hammerton was waiting for him. It required no persuasion on his part to quicken the pace of Walter: he jumped into the carriage—threw himself back with the ease of one accustomed to such luxuries, and very unlike a thriving apothecary, who sits in the middle of his vehicle in order that he may be seen by every one who passes.

Benjamin was in the rumble, the carriage

drove off, and never once did Walter look towards the home of his infancy, although his poor sick old father had crawled from his sofa to catch the last glance of his son's eye, or watch the carriage which contained him: his heart sank as he saw that no last look was bestowed either upon him or his house, and he inwardly ejaculated as he retraced his steps to the sofa, and swallowed one of those delectable draughts to be taken every four hours: "Show me the man who has no local attachment, and I will show you a selfish, heartless creature."

Hammerton, who, in consequence of the marriage of one of his sisters, had obtained leave of absence and had been somewhat suddenly recalled to join his ship, was a straightforward, open-hearted fellow. The fun and frolic of a midshipman's berth were to him the greatest joys of life—he was up to anything, alive to every enjoyment, steady in the performance of his duty, friendly to those in distress, ever willing to assist the less fortunate than himself. He sat by the side of

his contrast ;—a contrast indeed ! for Walter was penurious, tyrannical by nature, proud—purse-proud, haughty. But he had three times the talent of Hammerton, and could, when his surliness was softened, be a very agreeable, lively, witty companion. He had all the boyish levity of fourteen, as he felt that at last he was a man, his own master, free from a school, an emancipated slave. No sooner was he clear of Grosvenor-square than he rubbed his hands and exclaimed, “Now I begin life.”

“—Which has been the death of many a man,” replied Hammerton ; and then he continued : “Pray, Murray, is that your trunk in front, with all those brass nails jammed in like the ornamental part of a nobleman’s coffin ?”

“Yes,” replied the new-fledged midshipman.

“I don’t think you ’ll know it again,” continued Hammerton, “after it has been shaken in the hold, or tumbled in the wings : the carpenter’s yeoman will soon have those to deco-

rate his store-room. Why, you must have clothes enough to fit out the mess !”

“ I have no more,” replied Murray, “ than any other gentleman ought to have.”

“ If all the gentlemen, as you are pleased to call midshipmen, had as many traps as you have got, the ship would never be large enough to hold them. Midshipmen are called young gentlemen, but at present the system is not altogether quite so elegant as might be found in Grosvenor-square.—By-the-bye, Murray,—excuse my freedom—we sailors are rough knots, easily untied, and leaving the naked rope visible,—do you know, I think you are a confounded fool !”

“ That ’s pleasant,” replied Walter ; “ but perhaps you will explain ?”

“ Certainly,” continued Hammerton. “ If you saw a man who was walking through a sheltered shrubbery, where he was amused, happy, contented, dry, and comfortable, would not you think him a precious donkey to leave the shrubbery and its sheltered walks to come

out upon an open terrace where the wind and the rain came pouring down—where he was exposed to cold and every devilment under the clouds, when he could have continued his quiet walk in warmth and comfort ?”

“ Certainly,” said Walter.

“ Well, then, you are exactly in that position. You have had at your command every luxury in life, and yet you give them all up to follow the worst profession ever dreamt of for anything better than a Malay or a chimneysweep. Instead of comfort, be prepared for every discomfort ; instead of rich dishes at seven o’clock, make friends with your stomach to digest salted horse at noon ; instead of a comfortable bed to snore in for ten hours with your head supported by down pillows, with curtains to draw round your face lest a breath of cold air should disturb your slumbers, what think you of walking up and down some miserable planks for four hours ;—the harder it rains and blows, the more requisite is it that you should be in it ;—and when tired—ay, even to hinder sleep, for over-

fatigue is as fatal to slumber as inaction,—to turn into a wet hammock to swing about like a monkey in a fair,—to go to bed hungry and to rise hungry,—to be obedient to every call,—to be uncertain of the smallest moment of time as your own,—to go when you are bidden, and to come when you are commanded,—to eat and drink out of the coarsest materials,—to have bread swarming with insects, and water dirtier and more stinking than would disgrace a ditch in Devonshire? These are but the fewest of all the miseries to which you will find a midshipman's life is heir."

"But," said Walter with much animation, "the midshipman is free; he is not the slave of a taskmaster, he is not under the eye of a misdoubting parent, he is not watched in his outgoings or in-comings."

"No," replied Hammerton, chuckling at the joke; "but he is *watched*, as you will find, rather too regularly to be pleasant. The captain watches him; the first lieutenant gives him a watch; and the officer of the watch takes care

that he keeps his watch, or else it's watch and watch for him. You'll understand more of this before you are a week older; but now I'm thinking how differently people feel under different circumstances. I dare say you like this easy affair in which we are boxed up until we get to our journey's end; but I would a hundred to one sooner be in a stage-coach—for in that there's always some fun and frolic. I remember once when travelling in this kind of vehicle, we received among us the most disagreeable old woman that ever shipped a petticoat,—and that is saying a great deal for her talent of tormenting. I was a passenger with another mid, whose acquaintance you will make before to-morrow evening. We tried to please this old lady; but she kicked out one leg here, elbowed another there; would have her window up, although it was July; and whilst Smith and myself were reeking at every pore, this old she-devil—for devils run in both sexes—*would* keep fidgeting about; and although I knew that in the Black Hole at Calcutta it had been represented to those unfortunate sufferers

that their chance of keeping themselves cool was to keep quiet, and I recommended the same precaution to the old lady, hinting that heat was a very desirable thing during the winter at the North Pole, but that in July in England a cool breeze and a cool body were luxuries of which we debarred ourselves by our incessant motion, it was of no use,—the old lady would continue her art of tormenting, playing with her fat poodle-dog, nursing it one moment, and sending it adrift between our legs the next. We were both too much of sailors to ill-treat a dumb animal; and although we lifted it carefully off our feet, yet we never hurt the poor thing, excepting that it never was allowed to be still for a second. Smith proposed putting his elbow through the glass, and there establishing a current of air and of abuse; but I whispered to him, — (I knew the road well, for I had been on it only the day before,) —to begin making all possible grimaces when I should give him the signal, and leave the rest to me, taking care to bark like a dog and exhibit other canine accomplishments. We

then introduced the subject of hydrophobia ; and certainly the horror of this malady was much, if possible, enhanced, each of us telling some wonderful stories of what we had ourselves seen in foreign parts. ‘ Ah ! ’ said Smith, who saw the game I was playing, ‘ I never have felt easy since I was bitten by that cursed curly cur at Lisbon ; and every now and then I fancy myself with a shaggy skin, and twist round to look for my tail. I ’m sure I shall go mad before long ; for it was about this time three years that it happened, and every July since I have never passed a dog’s-meat barrow without whiffing a little, and clapping my nose nearer than the seller admired.’

“ ‘ Good Heavens ! ’ remarked the old woman, ‘ I hope you won’t go mad in the coach, sir ? Here—Muff, Muff ! ’ and she nursed her bloated beast like a baby ; ‘ and don’t, sir,—pray don’t bite my dog ! ’

“ ‘ I won’t, ma’am,’ said Smith with the most coaxing countenance in the world, ‘ not if I can help it ; but I like the smell of it a little. No, no, ma’am, if I bite anybody, it shan’t be the *dog* :

I suppose under such circumstances I shall feel too much interest in my species, and revenge myself upon their tyrants.'

" ' Lord, sir !' said the old woman, who kept watching Smith, who every now and then made a wry face and got up a gentle snarl, ' I never ill-used the poor creatures in my life, — did I, Muff ? Do tell the gentleman, who perhaps understands you—do tell him how kind I have been !'

" Muff snarled, and Smith repeated it as well as a signalman in a repeating-ship. We were now fast nearing a small stream. The bridge over which we ought to have passed was broken and under repair ; and as the water was not deep, the coaches passed through it a little to the left of the bridge. I kept my eyes about me, and when we came close to the place I gave Smith the signal : he began to howl and bark, to the infinite horror of the old woman ; he seized the dog, and pretended to bite its tail, and then looked with an eye of anger at the woman.

" ' My God ! coachman !' she began, letting

down the window; ‘murder!—stop—a madman!—I’m eaten—my dog’s tail is off!’ and here she was stopped, for Smith clapped his left hand out as he seized her with his right and opened the door: splash went the horses into the stream—the noise made him worse—the old lady made a struggle to escape, Smith having fixed his teeth upon her dress; when out she bounced, dog and all—smack she went into the middle of the stream, and lay kicking about like a harpooned porpoise. There was of course a halt; but we refused to have the washerwoman inside, which to be sure she did not insist upon, and she was taken on the roof to dry; Smith every moment clapping his hand out of the window, pinching her heel and barking like a dog. Believe my yarn, if you can. That’s one way of getting a cool coach with lots of room in it: now what the devil can we do in this grand concern, but *tell* yarns and get sleepy?”

Walter smiled, and although much amused with Hammerton’s manner of relating the anecdote, thought that in all probability he should

find himself rather overmatched than otherwise in mischief, if all the midshipmen were as frolicsome as Hammerton and Smith. He responded however to the last question, remarking that "Gentlemen travelled in their own carriages,"—for upon this point he had imbibed all the parvenu pride of his father,—and that "every person should maintain by outward appearance his rank and his station in life."

Hammerton looked at him, and, with a sneer that he could not control, remarked, "We shall soon take the starch out of you, my hero. I dare say you want your carriage and horses shipped, and will pay a morning visit to the captain according to your station in life! If you do. Master Murray, it will be on a gun-carriage. But as to your station, the first lieutenant will consider your lofty birth and give you an exalted one. I have no doubt you will be able to look down with the most sovereign contempt on all below you; and if you should fail a little from some trifling misconduct, to which I hear you have a little propensity, we will trice you up again: but take care you don't fall in love

with the gunner's daughter and marry her, or you will have a scratch from her cat, who has nine tails."

Walter never condescended to answer Hammerton, but bit his lip in silent disdain, nursing his wrath, and inwardly wishing that such a vulgar fellow had never been placed so near himself. Hammerton, on the contrary, considered himself as an oldster, and consequently as having the youngster under his care, to be delivered like a mail-coach parcel to the person to whom he was directed. He had already become commanding officer, and it was evident that he felt his authority, from the manner in which he spoke; for he said to Walter with an expression of sorrow, "Poor fellow! why you are like a young bear—all your sorrows are to come, and to-morrow you will be as much out of your element as a mosquito in a squall of wind."

This rather roused the wrath of Walter, who replied in a measured tone of voice, "Pray, *sir*, do you take me for a baby?"

"No, *sir*," replied Hammerton; "but I

take you for a cursed impertinent brat, and advise you to keep a civil tongue in your head, or ——”

“Or what?” said Walter, bristling up like a boar in a breeze.

“Or I’ll make you! There—don’t answer—hold your tongue, without you want your ears a little longer than nature has made them.”

“By Heavens!” said Walter, “I’ll stand this no longer!—Benjamin, open the door and let Mr. Hammerton out, and desire the postillions to turn back again.”

“*Go on,*” said Hammerton out of the window, “and drive to the George. The Peacock,” said he as he resumed his place, “is envied for its gaudy plumage; but the strength of the eagle is a better safeguard than feathers. Your father put you under my care, and I do not relinquish my office until I introduce you to Captain Barker. You may then go back, or elsewhere, if you like, for me; but I have got my sailing instructions, and I shall obey them to the letter.”

“Do you pretend to say,” said the petulant

boy, "that I can't do as I like in my father's carriage? I *will* go back, and the devil shall never force me to live in the same ship with you."

"Your father put me in command of his son and his carriage: I'm commanding officer here, and will be obeyed. And as for your not going on board, why your name is on the books of the 'Tribune—go you *must*: there's a word for pride to swallow—you *must* go. But don't fancy you will be detained against your will: one volunteer is worth two pressed men, and we have not come to pressing midshipmen as yet."

Murray sat back biting his lips and inwardly vowing vengeance against Hammerton: he even turned over in his mind the best mode of annoying his parents in the event of Sir Hector's death, for Hammerton's relations were tenants of his father; and in the worst passion of Murray's mind, he vowed he would extirpate such weeds, root and branch. Weeds they were in his eyes—loathsome weeds, which sprang up

and poisoned all around. What right, indeed, had such parish paupers to send their sons to serve in the navy ; and by what right did these upstarts domineer over their betters ? Walter was ignorant that in the noble—the honourable profession in which he had entered, the daring courage, the ready zeal, the active mind, the quick in resources, the fearless in danger—weeds, or not weeds—soon became the highest flowers ; and had he at that moment taken the trouble to think, his own good sense would have told him, that if all the world were on one day born, and all equal, long before noon it would be settled which half were to make the beds of the other half. The lazy, the passionate, the idle, the thoughtless, the timid, the weak, the sickly, must give place to the active, the temperate, the studious, the thoughtful, the brave, the strong, the healthy ; and the more wealth a man inherits, the more activity of mind it requires to regulate it. He who is indolent must become subservient ; he who is blindly generous must become involved ; and he

who trusts to another to do that which he *ought* to do himself, can have no cause of complaint if the undertaking fails.

Walter was not indolent ; but his pride, his overbearing pride, scarcely allowed him to think, lest he should be thought to work. The last remark of Hammerton stung him to the quick, *must* !—there 's a word for pride to swallow ;—it nearly choked him ; and when his throat relaxed its efforts to keep down his rage, he said with a slow voice and a most malignant sneer as he turned his eyes towards his companion, “ Set a beggar on horseback, and he 'll ride to the devil.”

Hammerton looked at him in anger ; but his generous heart soon made allowance for the petulance of youth, and he merely replied : “ When you have done mourning over the loss of your parent, and eaten the cake and jam which your old servant has crammed into the corner of that gingerbread trunk, then such remarks might meet their deserts. But come, Murray, no more of this ; you are endeavouring to make an enemy of the man who can be—nay, and

in spite of yourself, will be—your friend. You must drop your pride ; you must remember you are going amongst young men liberal by profession, and although as poor as Job, as proud as Lucifer. Take heed of the stubborn disposition of your nature. The donkey gets terrific blows on its crupper, and as it lifts its sluggard legs to resent the injury, merely kicks the air. The noble horse goes on without whip or spur—distances all animals of less active motion ; but the sulky horse which refuses to go, although the same animal,—nay, perhaps of the same breed,—is beaten, and spurred, and driven in spite of itself ; and, thus goaded on with bleeding sides, is not a bad picture of the youth who can do anything, but, from stubborn pride, will do nothing, until force, actual force, compels him.

“ We are now drawing towards Portsmouth ; in a quarter of an hour you will stand before your captain. Remember, he is more absolute than his king ; for he can make it whatever time of the day he likes, and we must set our watches to his will and caprice. Do as others

have done before you,—swim with the tide, which it is useless to oppose. When you speak, answer ‘Yes, *sir*,’ and ‘No, *sir*;’ for if you were a quaker, you would find that without you added the ‘*sir*,’ their creed, ‘Let your communication be yea, yea—nay, nay, would get you a mast-heading. If you *come the quaker over the captain* or any of the lieutenants, you will have time to correct your answer as you sit for four hours at the masthead, blowing your fingers like a Norway bear, and thinking of Grosvenor-square, which you are leaving behind.”

In justice to Hammerton, it must be remarked, that Sir Hector had urged him to disgust his son as much as possible with the service in which he had embarked; and as all men are rather partial to exaggerating either their wealth or their woes to strangers, Hammerton took especial care to finish the picture in his best style. His manner would have damped the courage of many a youngster; but Murray was not a lad to be frightened at a shadow—the very difficulties to

be overcome gave him a relish for the undertaking ; for he was just that kind of lad who would not have married the Venus de' Medicis with ten thousand a year, if there was no opposition to the match, but would have eloped with a poor parson's ugly daughter, if the parent merely exercised his right in the shape of a negative.

“ Very well, Hammerton,” said he ; “ I take all but the hint about my ears as it was meant, kindly. I shall do my best to be civil and discreet ; and as I have nothing to fear from a captain, I may approach him without any apprehension. I wish I had stopped to dine at that last stage ; I think eating a capital foundation for courage,—and everybody fights better when well fed. Can't we stop now ? ”

“ It is too late,” replied his companion, “ for we are close to the lines, and that gateway ahead is the entrance into Portsmouth.”

At this moment the postilions looked at each other—smack went the whip, the wheels turned round faster, and they entered the town in proper style. Every one, from the sentry to

the sweep—every soul, from the pensive marine to the jolly tar—every Jew, tailor, draper—apothecaries, with all their household goddesses, ran to the door to see the dashing equipage; and never before did two midshipmen make a greater sensation in Portsmouth. Hammer-ton had his quick eye at work; but Murray looked back. The bell at The George rang for the waiters, the postilions having given the signal; and before the carriage drove up, twenty or thirty people had assembled to see the un-lading of the valuable cargo.

It happened that three or four captains had agreed to dine together that evening, and who, between the numerous enterings of the waiters, who brought first a salt-cellar, then a spoon, then the bread-basket,—noodling out the time in order to keep hope alive in the hungry sons of the sea,—had huddled together by the window, wasting life by watching how others idled it away, when the noise of the approaching carriage, with the ring at the gate-bell, gave a little turn to their conversation.

“ ‘ Faith,” began one, “ this must be the First

Lord of the Admiralty, or the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. What a row these great fellows kick up! I think, Barker, we had better remind the waiters that we are waiting, or the big-wigs will take the Tribune's share of the dinner. I wish we could get the soup up before the cook splices it."

"I'll ring directly I see who comes out of this gingerbread affair," replied Barker: "I should be more inclined to think it contains some lucky son of an Indian Director, whose careful mamma had sent him down comfortably, in order that he might not feel annoyance until he takes a head-sea, which will turn his head."

"And his stomach!" said another: "what a lucky thing it is to have one's father born before one, and to be sent out to have money put into one's pockets in spite of oneself! He is young enough at any rate," continued the same speaker;—"why, he has a midshipman's uniform! Oh! it must be some youngster come to join his ship; and here appears the unhappy father about to part with his fond son. Look how the old servant bobs his arm out!

Why, d—n it, if it is not another youngster ! Well, now then for the venerable parent !—Hulloa ! what 's this ? Why, they have shut the door, and there goes the carriage to the stable. If those two youngsters belonged to my ship, I think I would teach them not to make such a noise in the streets. Who the devil can they be ?”

“Do you sleep here to-night, sir ?” said the waiter.

“Yes,” said Murray.

“Chambermaid, show this gentleman his room. Porter, take that trunk up into No. 4. Do you take dinner, sir ?”

“Yes,” said Murray surlily, for he could not understand why a gentleman could not arrive in his carriage without being so over-pestered by civility.

“A private room, sir ; or the coffee-room, sir ?”

“A private room, sir !” replied Murray, his upper lip turning in arrogant disdain. “Do you think I am going to dine at an ordinary ?”

“No *ordinary* fellow that,” said a waiter in an under-tone ; “I never saw so young a

lad with such a look. I wonder what his name is. Oh! here it is large enough on the trunk—‘Walter Murray.’ Now, I should like to know who Mr. Walter Murray may be, that he drives about in a carriage and four horses, and not more than fifteen years old. The other chap has nothing to do with the carriage, that’s certain, for he’s in the coffee-room, and pecking away at the cold round-o’-beef like a midshipman from a long cruise.”

The captains had now got to work,—the soup had not been spliced, and all were in high good-humour, when the master of the inn brought in the first course.

“Who came in that carriage, landlord,” said one of the true blues, “which came rattling on as if it would pound the stones into powder?”

“Two young gentlemen, sir,” replied Boniface.

“Young gentlemen!” said the captain,—“young gentlemen with four horses! Why, who are they?”

“One is a Mr. Walter Murray, who, I un-

derstand, is going to join one of the ships at Spithead, sir."

"Tell him," said Captain Barker, "to come here to me directly. Has he dined?"

"No, sir; but he has ordered dinner in the next room."

"Well done!" said the first speaker; "a midshipman, or a boy of the second class, in a private room!—and turtle soup, I suppose?"

"He desired his servant to order dinner," quoth the landlord; "and certainly," he added with a smile, "it is rather an expensive one."

"Tell him to come here," said Captain Barker; "he belongs to my ship,—and," he continued as the landlord withdrew, "is a neat nut for the devil to crack!"

"I must confess," said the first speaker, "that I have some curiosity to see this youngster who comes down to join his ship in such style. Who is he?"

"A son of Sir Hector Murray—a man of great wealth and of sterling worth: he has given me a line by the post, mentioning his son's pride and folly, and I'll begin with him

as I intend to go on: he is a kind of youth who must be brought up with a round turn, or he'll get such headway that he'll be wrecked before he can heave about."

"Mr. Murray says, sir, he'll come after he has dined."

"Oh!" ejaculated Barker, "much obliged to him for his civility. Have the kindness to tell the youngster who came down with him—a Mr. Hammerton—to come to me."

"He is in the coffee-room, sir,—I will send to him directly."

Hammerton seemed to enter almost as soon as the landlord had shut the door. He was hard at work at the beef and pickles when the messenger arrived, and he dropped his knife and fork and ran up stairs, knowing full well that his captain would ask him to dinner, and that, if he delayed to appear, he would be bundled on board in the first boat. As he entered the room, he bowed respectfully to the captains.

"Come here, Hammerton, and sit down.—Waiter, get a plate and knife and fork, and bring

the soup here again." Hammerton did as he was desired. "Now," continued Barker, "tell me what kind of a lad was your companion in Sir Hector's carriage, and how it is you have separated from him."

Hammerton spoke like the straightforward gentleman he was, not too boldly, not too timidly, but with a modest deference, such as inferiors in rank should bear towards those above them. "He is, sir, a very curious young lad: he is older at fifteen than many at twenty: he is a bold, daring youngster; but he has never been accustomed to be controlled. I left him because I could not afford to pay my share of a dinner such as he ordered: he did not invite me to partake of it, and I was too proud to hint my poverty."

"Well said, Hammerton," remarked the first speaker, whilst Barker patted him on the shoulder and looked at him with the pride a man feels when those who have been under his orders are praised by others. "Has he begun dinner yet?"

“ No, sir,” replied Hammerton, “ I should think not ; for I heard one of the waiters say that his servant had ordered enough for a mayor and corporation.”

“ Then while they are bringing up the soup for you, go and *bring* him here.”

Away went Hammerton, and without any preface opened the door and began,—“ The captain wants you, Murray : come along as quick as you can.”

“ I have sent once to him,” replied Murray, “ that I should come after dinner.”

At this Hammerton burst out laughing and said, “ You ’ll know better before half an hour is over your head than to send such a message to the captain : but come, he has sent me for you—don’t stand gaping there like a stuck pig : come along, I say.”

“ You may say what you like,” said Murray, “ but I don’t care any more for the captain than I do for that sweeper in the street, and go I shall not until I have had my dinner.”

“ Don’t make an ass of yourself,” continued

Hammerton, getting a little on towards an angry expression ; “ but come along, or I must take you by force.”

“ By force !” said the petulant boy ; “ I should like to see you use force !”

“ Oh,” said Hammerton, “ you will not be long in being gratified ;” and forthwith he seized his victim by the cuff of the coat with the left hand, and taking hold of a certain part of his unmentionables, he forced Murray’s head forward with one hand, whilst he kept back his stern with the other, and thus navigated him, in spite of all kicks and starts, through the passage. Meeting a waiter who was near the captain’s door, he desired him to open it, and in walked Mr. Murray in spite of himself. He seemed rather startled at finding himself in the presence of five captains, all in uniform, and all men not very likely to be frightened by a youngster.

“ Come here, sir,” said Barker in a quarter-deck voice, which, in spite of the independent air and bearing of Murray, who had drawn himself up for impertinence directly Hammerton

relinquished his grasp and allowed him to be perpendicular, went through him, and he felt, to use a common expression, cowed. “Come here, sir,” repeated his captain: “did you hear me speak to you? Pray, sir, why did you not come when I sent for you, without obliging Mr. Hammerton to execute his orders in the manner he has done—and done properly?”

“I thought——” began Murray.

“Thought, sir!” interrupted his captain; “who gave you leave to think, sir? A midshipman think!—d—n it, we are come to a pretty pass now! I *ordered* you, sir, to come to me; and take care you never disobey my orders. And now, sir, that you have received the reprimand you have deserved, sit down and dine here.”

Murray, astonished at this welcome of his captain, crept like a frightened dog to the chair which was placed by the side of his commander, and began the operation of eating without much appetite. This being remarked by another captain, one who afterwards enjoyed the title of a most magnificent tyrant, led to the following observation from him:

“It’s well for you, youngster, that you don’t belong to my ship; for, by all that’s sacred, if you did, you should be flogged this evening and starved to-morrow. This comes of sending midshipmen down in carriages; whereas if they were packed up like fish in baskets and bundled into carts or waggons, they would get a kind of hint as to what they might expect afterwards.”

Murray’s pride gave way to this uncalled-for remark, and he burst out into a flood of tears. His captain, with that consideration and kindness for which he was throughout life so respected, immediately endeavoured to reassure Murray; but the great step had been taken, his pride had given way, and all attempts to place him at his ease were ineffectual. At that moment he would have given worlds to retire and retrace his steps, and, since his feelings were hurt, he resolved to rely on his cunning. In a moment his resolution was taken: he dissembled his real sentiments under a smile; he ate without tasting, and drank without thinking.

“ Pretty well that, youngster,” said one,—
“ five glasses of wine in as many minutes ! I dare say your old father, although he sent you down here like a nabob, did not give you more than a glass of port when you came down with the children to dessert.”

Murray never answered ; but the sneer which curled his lip could not be mistaken.

“ Hammerton,” said Captain Barker, “ it is now getting high time to go on board, and I don’t like my youngsters to sleep on shore at Portsmouth : so, do you hear, take Murray with you on board, and make him as snug and as comfortable as you can. Tell the first lieutenant to send the gig for me at eight o’clock to-morrow morning,—we shall sail about noon. And here—stop—the blue peter must be hoisted at eight. And tell Mr. Garnet to turn all the women out of the ship, and to unmoor at daylight. Take my gig, and see this youngster’s traps safe : he’ll be as much adrift as a wreck in a tideway. Good night.”

Murray, glad to escape, bolted out of the door ; but he was recalled in the instant by

his captain. "Mr. Murray, when gentlemen leave a room where they have been invited to dine, it is customary to wish their companions good night, or to bow to them: it is a mark of respect which I beg you will now manifest, and of which I trust I shall never again have occasion to remind you."

"I wish you a very good night, sir," said the captain who had made the remark relative to the wine, at the same time bowing his head and continuing, "It's pretty lucky for you, you unlicked cub, that you do not belong to my ship!" Murray heard it all, bowed, and retired.

No sooner was he clear of his tormentors than he ran into his own room: the cloth was laid, the wax-lights flaring: he rang the bell and sent for Benjamin. Hammerton told him to get his traps ready, jumped down to the coxswain and ordered him to bring up some of the gig's crew to take his own and Murray's trunk on board, inwardly cursing the sulky cur who had thus deprived him of his cruise on shore; for Hammerton, smart as he was,

had no intention of going on board before the following morning.

“ Benjamin,” said Murray as the old servant came into the room, “ we must go back to town directly. Be as quick as possible—get horses—never mind packing up, but be round in a moment. Not all the devils alive should get me on board a ship—I have had quite enough already; and my father will be pleased to see me return. Run, good Benjamin.”

Benjamin was no runner—he was no footman; he stood a second in thought, and then said, “ Master Walter, your father will be so pleased !”

“ There—there—no long speeches; run like a lamplighter—round with the carriage—pay the bill,—look sharp! Why, you move like a snail,—there—quick! quick!” and he shoved the old servant out of the room. “ I don’t think,” he mused to himself, “ that there is necessity to leave anything behind me. I’ll get my ornamented coffin, as Hammerton called it, packed; I had better work myself than lose the contents.” And away he went to pack

up; whilst Hammerton, who had given the requisite orders, had started off to the Fountain, to see if any of the mids of the Tribune were on shore, and wished a passage on board without paying the heavy fare which some of those eager boatmen demand who ply either from Common Hard or the Point. Murray, for once, was active both in mind and body; he was turning in his brain how fortunate it was that he should escape paying for his dinner, which honour he intended for his new captain. He shoved in his linen, which Benjamin had placed ready for next morning, inwardly cursing the officious fellow who thus rendered his escape subject to delay; and then came across him the certainty that if the carriage was brought round, his captain would hear the noise and detection follow. He knew he was clear of Hammerton; so, jumping down stairs, he desired that the carriage might not be brought round, and himself urged the postilions to their exertions.

In the meantime one or two seamen belonging to the gig had arrived at the George; and

having inquired for the trunk belonging to the new young gentleman, were shown into his room, handled the future ornaments for the carpenter's store-room, and trudged merrily along to the boat, the coxswain remaining to show Murray the way to the Fountain, where Hammerton awaited his arrival.

Things were in this train, the trunk on one tack and the owner on the other, when the bell of the captain's room rang. When the servant entered, he was asked if the young gentlemen had gone on board. The waiter answered, that one had left the hotel and sent some of the gig's crew up ; but that the other was waiting for his carriage, to which he had ordered four horses.

"This," said the tyrant captain, "is some trick of your other youngster, Barker: he has persuaded this young colt that he must drive to your *gig* in his *carriage*, and some fun will come out of this."

"Yes," said Barker, "likely enough; but I think it rather unfair on his father, who will have to pay for the frolic; and although I

like frolics as much as any one, yet I think they might break in the youngster at a more reasonable expense. I must put a stop to this. —Tell the landlord to come here.”

Up came Boniface, who had been arguing a point on which there was much difference ; the landlord desiring to be paid for the dinner ordered, though not consumed ; the others—for Benjamin and Murray both agreed in saving the money—holding that people never paid for things of which they had not partaken. Whilst this was in dispute, the waiter came and told his master he was wanted. Without, therefore, coming to a conclusion, the landlord desired his auditors to await his return, and attended the summons of the captains, whom he knew to be impatient gentlemen, and men who liked to see all orders promptly obeyed. If Murray’s love of money had not been uppermost for the moment, he would have had a clear start : the moments he lost in disputing with the waiter proved fatal to his scheme.

Barker asked about the horses ; and, to his astonishment, he learnt that the young gentle-

man was about to return to town. He desired the carriage might not be allowed to leave, and that the young wanderer should be sent to him. Down came Boniface just in time to meet the waiter : " All right, sir," said the latter ; " here 's the money : gentleman 's gone, horses paid, and all settled." Barker had followed the landlord, and hearing this, ran without his hat, at once steering for the gate, Boniface puffing and blowing behind him like a broken-winded horse.

CHAPTER IV.

The Mid's first night afloat.

THERE was scarcely time for the captain to recover his breath, before the clatter of the carriage was heard, and the landlord stood ready to prevent the progress of the postilions. "Stop, Thomas!" he bawled out directly they were within hail; but Murray, fearful of some recovery of his person, called out, "Don't stop for anything or anybody, and I'll pay you handsomely." But Thomas knew the voice and the portly figure of his master, and pulled up in obedience to the order. Out popped Murray's head; and the first thing he saw was his captain. In one moment he was handed out; the captain took charge

of the truant midshipman, and without saying a word to the servant, or taking the least notice of the capers of the postilions, he walked off with the youngster, got his hat at the inn, and, calling his coxswain, saw Murray into the gig, desired the crew to shove off, and merely said, "Tiller, tell Mr. Garnet to see that young gentleman made comfortable." At this moment, Hammerton came running down to Sally-Port: seeing the captain, he turned short round, ran down to the Point, popped into a boat, and away he went on board. The gig's crew took it easily, talking as they pulled; to them time was indifferent. A light flaw of wind coming off, they shipped the mast, hoisted the sail, and then lolled on the thwarts. Murray was in a sea of wonder: they took no more notice of him than they would of a dog; the only object they had in view, was to spin out the time until all duty was done on board and the hammocks piped down.

Old Benjamin having paid for the four

horses, went in that dignified manner the first stage, and then lazily continued his route, arriving in London the next morning. Hammerton concluded something was wrong and was anxious to repair it; his chance was to overtake the gig; and the two boatmen pulled heartily on the promise of extra pay, and a glass of that villanous stuff which, whilst it exhilarates, poisons the blood. They soon got sight of the white lug-sail, and it was not long before the coxswain heard, "Gig ahoy!" In a moment every man was upright in his place; the oars were out in a second, the sail lowered, the mast unshipped, and the boat's head pulled round. Hammerton jumped on board; and, taking no notice of Murray, sat down, seized hold of the yoke-lines, and said, "Give way, my lads." Even Murray, who was brooding over his capture, was sensible of a great difference: the increased labour of the men, the silence which was observed, the steady manner in which they plied the oars, was sufficient to show him the respect which was paid to his companion, and which had been

neglected towards him. "Boat ahoy!" was now heard. "No, no," was answered.—"Are you coming here?" "Yes."

The 'men now pulled harder, the bow-oar was laid in, and Murray was alongside the Tribune. Hammerton sprang up the side, saying, "Hand up that youngster, Tiller," as if he had been a pig or a box; but Murray, active by nature, caught hold of the side-ropes, and, much to the astonishment of Tiller, who was ready to assist him, was on deck much quicker than almost any other youngster who thus made his first step on board a man-of-war. Hammerton, who knew that when the captain came on board he should in all probability get a lecture for allowing Murray to give him the slip and for losing sight of his convoy, began to tame his refractory messmate before he could recover his astonishment at the first sight of a frigate.

"Take your hat off when you come on his Majesty's quarter-deck," he began; and suiting his action to the word, he knocked it off; and then the natural goodness of his heart

returning, he told one of the side-boys to pick it up, and said in a mild manner, "I only did that, Murray, to remind you that for the future you must never come on the quarter-deck without that mark of respect. You will remember my way of giving the hint until you get so used to do it, that when you come on deck in the middle of the night, your finger will go up to your hat as mechanically as a watch goes. But I must be off to the first lieutenant. Here, Weazel," continued he, calling another youngster, who was supposed to be keeping watch, which means dozing over the gangway, "look after Mr. Murray until I come back, and take care he does not fall down the hatchway."

Weazel was one of those sly young gentlemen who sleep with one eye open, and, like all youngsters of that day, was fond of tormenting a Johnny Newcome. The very idea of having something to do was pleasant to him; for there is no greater difficulty than keeping one's eyes open when there is no duty to perform. Weazel made a kind of bob of

the head, which was not noticed by Murray ; for Weazel's dress, a round dirty jacket, a large pair of Flushing trousers, and a glazed hat, were not very likely to strike Murray with admiration.

"Come to join the ship?" said Weazel.

"I am," replied Murray.

"Are your traps on board?"

Murray answered, that "He had no traps which he knew of."

"No traps!" re-echoed Weazel: "what! are you one of the wash-and-wear boys—is all your kit in a worsted stocking? or are you like the marine who had only two shirts and made six of them?"

"I dare say," replied Murray, "that I have shirts enough,—but should have no objection to know the secret how to make two into six."

"You are a precious greenhorn, I see," continued Weazel. "Why, this way to be sure:—If you have two shirts, you have one on and one off, one dirty and one clean, one wet and one dry,—and there are six of them. Did you bring your bed with you?"

Murray looked at him with surprise, and said, "I suppose I have money enough to pay for my bed and my room also."

"That's true enough," replied Weazel; "but you must know where to buy them. Here, quartermaster, take this gentleman to the gunner's yeoman," (and he conveyed his meaning to the old sailor by a sly look,) "and ask him if he has a bed to spare, and show this gentleman into a decent room with white curtains and a mahogany washhand-stand."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the quartermaster: "This way, sir, if you please;" and he was directing Murray forward when Hammerton came on deck and called him.

"Where are you bound to, Murray?" asked Hammerton.

"I was going with this gentleman," said Murray with great simplicity, "in order to see my room and my bed."

"What! Weazel," said Hammerton, "getting him into a line before he has been five minutes on board!" and he burst out laughing at the answer of Murray, who evidently considered

a ship as a floating inn, where accommodations might be had by paying for the same.

“Follow me, Murray,” said Hammerton; and forthwith he led the way down the companion, saying to Weazel, “Let him rest to-night, and to-morrow we will give him such a run that we will break the neck of his pride and make a jolly fellow of him.”

“Hulloa !” said Weazel, who was quite a youngster; “what, pass the officer of the watch without saluting him ! I tell you what it is, young gentleman,” continued the little scamp, “if you are guilty of such disrespectful behaviour, I shall perch you at the masthead to look for the wind. Go down, sir,—follow that gentleman, sir, and take care to behave better in future.”

Even the old quartermaster could not help laughing, and Hammerton’s titter was plainly heard below. Weazel had drawn himself up as straight as a boarding-pike, and imitated one of the lieutenants in repeating the very words which had been applied to himself not

a fortnight before. Hammerton led the dejected Murray to the steerage : his visions of liberty had flown—Hammerton's words in the carriage had already been verified, and instead of one tyrant he saw himself surrounded by dozens.

“ Here 's a youngster come to join the ship,” said Hammerton as he entered the starboard berth of the Tribune : “ the first lieutenant has told me he is to mess with us, and the captain says we are to make him comfortable.”

All eyes, even those which had been directed to a cribbage-board where two of the elder midshipmen were playing, were raised towards him : one midshipman, who was busy in playing over some wretched air on a still more wretched flute, just lifted his glance from the old thumbed music before him ; and three or four who were playing blind hookey gave a squint and continued the game. A miserable candle, something between a dip and a rushlight, barely sufficed to show him who had left all luxury behind the nature of his dreary abode, and Murray almost wished himself again on deck

with Weazel to go in search of the dimity-curtained bed-room.

“Sit down, Murray, and we’ll have some supper.”

“Avaust there, boy,” said the caterer; “supper’s done; and it’s against the rules of the mess for those who have been on leave to have any when they return. But stop, as Mr. Murray’s a stranger, we’ll break through the rule.”

In a few minutes there was placed on the table a japanned basket, rather the worse for wear, in which was some biscuit; and close by its side was a piece of cheese which looked as if all the rats in the ship had been pecking at it: a black jack of swipes completed the display, and the fastidious Mr. Murray was told to fall to with what appetite he had. Ham-merton gave directions as to a hammock, and then it was ascertained that the good man to whom Sir Hector had entrusted the outfit had omitted the bed. A mattress and some purser’s blankets were spread upon the deck, and this delightful retreat from care was voted ready

for its tenant. In the mean time Murray's mind was undergoing a rapid change: he saw his position; he knew it was useless to swim against the stream, and swallowing his pride, although he could not screw up his courage to swallow the swipes, he assumed a look of more contentment; and when Hammerton returned, he entered into some conversation, giving an account of his attempted escape, with the unexpected interposition of the captain. This was not altogether very pleasant to Hammerton, for he knew that Murray had been placed under his care, and that it was needless to conjure up excuses when no excuse in the least degree satisfactory could be made: like a wise young man, he was convinced it was of no use to annoy himself about the past, and as he could not dive into futurity, he made a compromise with his memory not to bother him, and he began to ask all the news since he had left—mentioned the orders he had brought on board—and thus the time crept on until the master-at-arms popped his unwelcome head in

the berth, saying, "Nine o'clock, gentlemen; please to put the light out."

The lantern was borrowed, and Murray was conducted to his bed. He looked at it with no small surprise: it was impossible for him to disguise his disgust, and it was not until then that the pride of the haughty boy gave way. He who could have brooked anything rather than show himself conquered, was now completely subdued; and as he lay down, without undressing, on the bed, more than one tear started from his eyes. Hammerton saw this, promised to make him more comfortable the next night, advised him to turn in regularly, and finding that his presence only made the matter worse, wished him good night, and, like a mule-driver in South America, rolled himself up in his scanty bed, and was soon in a sound sleep.

Mr. Weazel's love of mischief now began to show itself. "It would be capital fun just to cut down the Johnny Newcome by the feet," said this urchin; "that would not hurt him, and

in all probability would do him much good ; as he would get accustomed to tricing up his own hammock, and thus receive one salutary lesson before the ship sailed."

The officer of the watch, the ship being moored and all boats hoisted up, considered himself entitled to a nap ; so, looking round to see that all was right and quiet, he desired the mate of the watch to call him at six bells, at which time the tide changed, to keep a good look-out and not allow any shore-boats to come near the ship, after which directions he went below. When he was supposed to be asleep, the mate called Weazel, who had been stretched out on the signal-lockers, one eye shut and the other stargazing, and repeating the words of the lieutenant, he also went below out of the cold, rolled himself up in a cloak, and closed his eyes in forgetfulness. Weazel, who did not care about sleep but preferred fun, now called the quartermaster ; the same orders were given to him, with directions that if he (Weazel) should not come up before five bells, to take care and give him a hail ; upon which

he went below, leaving the rough old sailor to look out for the ship, which he did by going to the signal-lockers and bringing himself to an anchor on them.

As the bell struck four, the "All's well" went round the ship, the sentries walked the gangways, and the old quartermaster, who had been in Howe's action, began running up the log of his memory, every now and then humming a bit of a stave which grew less and less in sound and in length, until it subsided into something very like a snore ; and thus his Majesty's ship the Tribune floated on the waters at Spit-head with only four or five marines awake, all the rest, with the exception of Weazel, being snug enough below, fast asleep and likely so to remain.

Weazel now got down to the steerage ; the sentry was leaning against the after-bulk-head so nearly asleep as not to heed him ; and whilst the young scamp was groping his way to find out his victim's berth, he fell over something on the deck and tumbled alongside of Murray. The proud boy had just dozed

off, and had fallen into incoherent dreams. The tawdry servants of Grosvenor-square were standing ready to receive their young master; the warm hall was a welcome from the cold without; the rich repast tempted even the half-cloyed appetite of the spoilt boy; the spacious bed-room, the clean furniture, the comforts of life—all won him to repose. Anon came the rumbling of carriages — Hammerton's figure — the captain's sudden appearance—a faint glimpse of the features of Boniface and his waiters; and then the wit, even in sleep, which prompted the thought—"Curse your chattering waiters! no waiters are worth a straw but tide-waiters and dumb-waiters: had this rascal been dumb, I should have been back again." The tyrant captain's words and proposed works came across his recollection with a cold shiver; he had mentioned flogging—pride turned away at the word;—he was on the waters, the boat lazily pursuing its way: then came the shudder as the bread-basket and black jack darkly pictured themselves in the foreground; and as the ideas got more confused, the black jack

mixed itself up with the captain's face. At the moment when the bread-basket seemed to dance a well-bred caper with Hammerton, Weazel's toes came in contact with the pillow, and he rolled over the fallen boy, himself falling with his nose against Murray's thick shoes, the one rousing up at the sudden intrusion, the latter letting out a few words more frequently in the mouths of midshipmen than in the pages offered to the public. When the first volley of exclamations had escaped Weazel, he thought of his fallen dignity, and assumed the officer, forgetting that he had been left on deck to look after the ship. "Hulloa ! sentry, bring your light here. Who is this fellow lying about the decks with his clothes on ?—send for the master-at-arms. Who the devil are you ?—rouse up. Why, you are as hard to weigh as the best bower, and rigged in dock too like a Liverpool ship !"

Poor Murray, unused to such ungentle intrusions, remained flat, for he still thought himself in a bed ; then, having the intention of getting out, he found he had only to get *up*. He rub-

bed his eyes, astounded at finding a lantern poked into his face, and was so much surprised at seeing a soldier close alongside of him, that he could only say, "Where am I?"

"Where are you?" replied Weazel: "why, where you have no business to be! Don't you know the orders that no person is to lie about the decks, and no one to turn in all standing like a trooper's horse?—Oh," continued the young scamp, who pretended just to discover the mistake, "it's you, is it, Mr. Murray? Hamerton ought to have mentioned this. But go to bed; I hope you may not be disturbed again: but you must take your clothes off; why, to-morrow you'll look like a walking blanket! Sentry, lend Mr. Murray a hand to unrig himself, and take care how you lift his stays—good night!" and away went this urchin on deck again, full of mischief as an egg is of meat. He knew from his own practice that the quartermaster would take a calk, and being balked in his cruise below, he was resolved to make it up upon some one. Very gingerly he stepped on deck. Not a sound was to

be heard: the sentries thought it better to be posts than to walk their posts, so they were on each side lolling over the gangways. The quartermaster's nose announced his situation, and forthwith Weazel stepped towards him. The old fellow seemed to know that he had no right to sleep, and talked a little in his dreams, as if to prove that he was not quite in slumber, and thus he betrayed his thoughts, and perhaps what he remembered with most pride:—"29th May 1794," he began, then came a slight snore—"starboard tack—double-reefed topsails"—snore again—"led through the French line—touching up the Montague, and think I hear the admiral now giving orders to set the top-gallant sails—signal up for close action"—snore—"slapped at it—saw Polly Jones handing the powder, gallant creature!—fire away, lads"—snore. At this moment, when the old fellow was in the middle of the action, Mr. Weazel lifted up the quartermaster's legs, gave him a haul, and down slipped the warrior from the signal-lockers, making sundry most uncomfortable noises with his head against

the brim, and landing on his stern on the quarter-deck. "Run aboard of us, by the piper!" said he; and up he jumped like a lamp-lighter.

"Fast asleep, eh!" began Weazel: "a very pretty fellow you are to be trusted!"

The old fellow rubbed his head, got his hat on again, and coolly answered, "Why, Mr. Weazel, if you had been on deck, I should not have shut my eyes in order to rub up that battle."

In the mean time the sentries were all walking about again, and his Majesty's ship had a watch.

"Hold your tongue, if you please," continued Weazel, "and don't speak until you are spoken to. Get me a small fish-hook somewhere: trot, and look sharp."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the old fellow, who took the joke in good part, although he was none the better for the stern-board he had made—or, as Weazel said, "for having gone down by the stern so fast." And jumping below to his berth, he soon returned with a macka-

rel-hook which he happened to have in his bag.

“Here’s one, Mr. Weazel,” said he on his return, “that will hold any fish you’ll catch to-night.”

“Ay,” said Weazel, “that’s a good one : run and get a long, stout ropeyarn.” This was soon managed ; and the gentleman, who had studied the art of tormenting thoroughly, fastened the yarn to the hook, and saying, “Now see if you can’t forget Lord Howe for once and keep your eyes open,” down went the youngster to carry on his fun.

He had now got the bearings and distance of his victim, and went to work quite sure of success ; whilst Hammerton, who had roused up in consequence of the noise occasioned by Weazel’s fall over Murray, had waited until the mischievous elf had returned on deck, and knowing that he would pursue his frolic, told Murray to change beds with him ; and with much care and kindness he put the youngster into his hammock, tucked him up, and not minding the want of sheets himself, for he was used

to all rough work, he lay down on the deck, and imitated the precaution of Mr. Weazel,—which was to keep one eye open, twisting up his handkerchief, and keeping all ready for action. Weazel was soon at work, and Hammerton saw him fasten the hook to the blanket. Weazel then retired the length of the rope-yarn, and in a minute afterwards away went the blanket, and away went Weazel; he was up the hatchway, on the main-deck blanket and all in a second.

“Well done, Master Weazel!” said Hammerton; “but I’ll pay you off in your own coin!” So he leisurely walked to Weazel’s hammock, and taking therefrom a blanket, rolled himself up in another, leaving Weazel’s all loose for another haul. Weazel was soon down again and up again, having made another successful cruise and stowed both blankets away in the stern-boat. Hammerton took another from the same place; and five bells having struck, the mate of the watch was roused and all offensive operations stopped. At six bells, with the change of the tide, came two

very unwished-for companions,—the officer of the watch and a heavy fall of rain. The wind came off the land, veering about ; and the officer of the watch, the mate, and Weazel, all took shelter under the heavy canopy of heaven. When the lieutenant was on deck, all eyes were open ; he asked the mate what weather they had had since four bells, and the mate responded as if he had been watching in reality.

The breeze and the rain freshened towards midnight ; and when Weazel was relieved and went below, there were too many eyes open for any more of his frolics. A minute was ample time for him to get into his hammock ; and a sixtieth part of that time was sufficient to convince him that his blankets were on a cruise. Out he turned, and directed his operations towards his supposed victim. Hammerton was on the look-out for this ; and when Mr. Weazel began to uncover him, he started up and administered such a flagellation as kept him warm for some time, and when Weazel was nearly asleep—for it was doubtful if he ever was so

much off his guard as to shut both eyes at once,—he was welcomed by the arrival of the two soaking blankets, thrown over him, and mingling their dewy drops with the before dry bedding.

This little anecdote is related principally as it was the means of bringing Murray forward in a prominent manner next morning.

CHAPTER V.

A Pugilistic encounter.—The Tribune under weigh.

THE morning of the 16th of September was ushered in by a sweet squall from the south-west; the rain fell in torrents, and his Majesty's ship Tribune presented about as miserable a picture of happiness as the imagination of a man beaten down by blue devils and under the infernal torments of a headache could fancy. The thick haze of the morning, the dirt which in newly-fitted-out ships is excessive—the wet, the dreary dulness of that morning struck a chill upon Walter. Glad to escape from his wretchedness below, for the gratings had been placed on the hatchways to prevent the wet from reaching the lower deck, and two hundred and fifty men had, until five

o'clock in the morning, if not totally exhausted, rendered the air below very unlike the cool breeze which blows pure over a snowy mountain—he tumbled out of his swinging bed upon a wet swab which the prudent solicitude of Mr. Weazel had provided in case any accident might occur to his victim during his first night's uncomfortable slumber on board. It was placed as a convenient mat, and, fortunately, was used before his feet were covered with stockings. To this succeeded the horrors of a first toilette in the steerage of a frigate, and the mortification of a wilful boy who suddenly finds that by his own folly he has relinquished the comforts for the miseries of life. It is in vain to paint this picture ; no one can express how severely the mind may be wounded, and what an effort it requires to conceal the sufferings. Walter was no boy to cry amongst boys—his pride forbad it. He had felt abashed in the presence of his captain, and he could have cheerfully stood the rebuke which occasioned it had he been prepared: taken unawares, he was unable to resist the first impulse of

Nature, and she was victorious. Now he was on his guard; and when Weazel, in kindly offering to place his basin in a better position, capsized it over the half-clad son of Sir Hector, the midshipman of one night showed himself capable of revenging an insult by striking his tormentor a most undeniable blow on the nose. The basin was dropped in a moment, Weazel was stripped for a fight, and the first round had been fought before Hammerton had time to interpose.

“Murray,” Hammerton began, “this must not be; it’s against all regulations.”

“He struck me,” said Weazel, “and I will have satisfaction.”

“Certainly, certainly,” said half a dozen youngsters, who were always ready for some fun. “A ring! fair play’s a jewel! Mr. Long Togs is not going to come Captain Grand over Weazel; and if Hammerton interferes, we will soon get an oldster on our side to see fair play. At him, Weazel!”

Weazel went at him directly; and Murray, who was by no means averse to the fight, more

especially when he learnt all his antagonist's projected annoyance against him, received him warmly : he stood head up boldly, and returned more than blow for blow. The youngsters generally sided with their old messmate ; but, like gallant little fellows, they cheered on Walter, and kept calling out, " Bravo, Greenhorn !" " Now, Long Togs !" " Hurrah, young Hector !" And whatever might be the probable result, either for or against their inclination, it was a regular stand-up fight — fair play and no favour. Walter was soon discovered to be not only the most scientific, but the strongest ; and Weazel, after a visible change had come over his features, hauled down his colours and surrendered. Murray immediately stepped forward and offered him his hand, which Weazel accepted, saying, " I did my best ; but, confound your school exercises ! you have more knowledge." At once all angry feeling passed away ; it was decided that Murray was the best man ; and although Weazel looked forward for another more prosperous result, he in reality became

the friend of his antagonist, and lent him all the assistance in his power.

The very circumstance of a youngster not fourteen hours on board the ship having fought his first battle, and having bravely stood forward against one who, to use a familiar expression, fought like a cock on his own dunghill, served to exalt the victor much in the eyes of his new messmates, and a more kindly feeling was instantly shown towards him. Those who knew Weazel as their better man at once seemed to acknowledge Murray as a superior; whilst those who were beyond his reach were not backward in their praises. Walter soon found that to begin well is a great point; and he shrewdly enough considered that it was easy to maintain a position carried against an inferior force, and that the best way to calm the anger of an opponent was by a generous behaviour after the victory.

He dressed, and went on deck.

“Hulloa!” said the first lieutenant, who was as busy as first lieutenants like to be, “who

have we here with a swelled face and black eye, out of uniform, and strutting about like a peacock? Who the devil are you, sir?"

"I am Mr. Walter Murray, sir."

"Walter Murray, sir?" reiterated the first lieutenant; "and how came you on deck in that dress? Come here, sir: pray what is the matter with your face? — you seem as if you had been fighting."

"It was last night," replied Murray: "a boy attacked me in the street, and I punished him."

"Faith, youngster," replied Mr. Garnet, "he seems to have punished you! Where was Mr. Hammerton when this happened?"

"He was not with me, sir: it was before he met us in the boat, when he came off in the other boat."

"Why, what nonsense is this!" said the first lieutenant. "Quartermaster, tell Mr. Hammerton I want him."

Murray now found that, from a generous wish to save Mr. Weazel, he had involved his friend and told his first falsehood. And he was right:

Hammerton got a serious rebuke for having lost sight of his charge, and having thus allowed him to be attacked and perhaps plundered by any dirty vagabond of a boy, or a more likely prowler in the shape of a female pirate. In saving himself by telling the truth, he implicated Murray; the whole affair came out, and Mr. Garnet read Murray a lecture which accorded well with the advice of Sir Hector. Whilst he gave him credit for a proper spirit, he rebuked him for the ungentlemanly rencontre; and whilst he remarked upon the generosity of feeling which prompted him to save his beaten antagonist, he deprecated the falsehood by which it was done; and gave Walter clearly to understand that the next lie, white or black, in which he detected him, should be followed by a punishment as disgraceful as it should be severe.

“Take him below, Mr. Hammerton,” he continued; “put him in his uniform: mind, he is in your watch—to be stationed in the mizen-top—one of the captain’s aides-de-camp at quarters—in the third division—and to have charge

of the jolly-boat. Look after him, Hammerton, and tell him in a kind manner that I shall teach him to ride on the cross-trees if ever his tongue gets the better of his heart.—Pass the messenger below—turn the hands up—unmoor ship. Carpenters ! ship the bars ! There — get out of the way, youngster !”

In a minute Mr. Walter Murray found himself stationed and quartered ; the orders given for the first step towards removing him from his native country ; himself already despised, his talent at lying made evident, in a scrape with his captain for having attempted to run away without even facing the danger which he fancied awaited him ; in awful subjection to those in authority above him—in a hornet’s nest with his equals, and as yet unheeded by his inferiors.

He was soon in harness, and again on deck. Walter’s mind was naturally active, and had it not prompted him to use his curiosity, the close smell below would have driven him on deck. Here he found himself always in the way, as intruders generally are,—called youngster by

the first lieutenant, and shoved about right and left by all who approached him. "Pride will have a fall," as the copy says; and Murray, like a sensible lad, allowed his pride to fall without hurting himself. He seemed to shake off all remembrance of home; and when the men stepped out, as they leant their weights against the capstan-bars, to the tune of a fife and drum, his heart beat lighter—his mind felt easier.

No sooner was one anchor weighed, than the messenger was shifted, and the ship hove short upon the other cable; and at this moment, when the bars were unshipped, the gig returned on board without the captain. A note was handed to the first lieutenant, who immediately called out, "Get a gun ready forward;—quartermaster, convoy signal at the mast-head." The gun was reported ready, and was fired as the stop of the signal was broken. Walter watched the harmless smoke as it curled over the ship, and kept his eye fixed upon a ring which retained its form although blown far away to leeward, and which was occasioned

by some grease having been placed round the muzzle of the gun. Weazel, who was stationed abaft, saw what Murray's eye was directed to, and approaching him, said, "That is curious, Murray."

"It is," replied Murray, "and I was puzzling my head to think how that ring is formed of one part of the smoke, when the rest is unattached and is blown away."

"God bless you!" said Weazel, "nothing so easy to explain. That ring is where the shot went through; and if you want to see how it is made, you have only to look into the gun when they fire it off. The shot comes out so quick, that it jams all the smoke together, through which it passes and blows away the rest. You have heard of the wind of a shot: I've known it upset a jolly-boat at a quarter of a mile; and last year, when we fired a salute as the port-admiral passed the ship, the old boy's wig was blown off, and the little hair he had left on his head was turned black with the smoke."

"It must be very dangerous," replied Murray,

still watching the ring, "to fire a shot amidst such crowds of shipping. I wonder no one is hurt."

"Wonder indeed !" replied Weazel ; "you'll see by-and-bye how nicely our gunner can fire a gun. What a family of daughters that man has, to be sure ! If you want to see them, only go and ask him for an introduction. Tell him 'the first lieutenant desires him to fire another gun, that you may see the shot come out.' Here, quartermaster, just introduce Mr. Murray to the gunner : he wishes to see his daughters."

"Shall I show him the one in the cabin which you married the last cruise, Mr. Weazel ?" said the knowing old sailor."

"Yes," said Weazel with indifference ; "and I make no doubt Mr. Murray will soon be as well acquainted with her as I am, and cut me out in that quarter."

The design of the mischievous Mr. Weazel was, however, again frustrated, in consequence of the appearance of Hammerton, who came abaft in order to take Murray below, the first lieutenant having given the order to pipe

to breakfast. In the mean time the captains from the different merchant ships came on board for convoy instructions, and reported their vessels ready for sea, receiving in reply an order to unmoor ; for which purpose a general signal was afterwards given by the fore-topsail of the Tribune being loosed and another gun fired. Active preparations were now going forward : the women were all turned out of the ship ; the shore-boats desired to shove off, although many lingered round the frigate ; there was a constant intercourse with the other ships ; and about eleven o'clock the young gentlemen were summoned to attend on deck, as the captain was coming on board.

It has often been remarked, and with great truth, that there is no respect more conspicuous than that which is shown to a captain when he is received on board his own ship ; neither can any stranger witness a scene more likely to impress him with the absolute power of the little monarch afloat, than in the very proper manifestation of respect so readily offered. It was not lost upon Murray : it filled his mind

with an ambition to have equal devotion paid to himself—the hope of youth, which manhood so seldom realises, broke upon him, and all the Weazels in the world, with all the miseries of the midshipmen of the time to which we refer, could not at that moment have weaned him from the Navy.

“Where is Mr. Murray?” said the captain, as soon as he had returned the salute of his officers, and had spoken some words concerning the outward appearance of the ship to the first lieutenant. “Hoity toity!” said the captain, “what is this I see! Pray, sir, with whom have you been fighting?”

“With Mr. Weazel,” replied Murray.

“Where is that little scamp Weazel?”

Mr. Weazel, who had heard the captain ask for Murray, and who knew well enough the probable consequence of having fought him below, instantly ran over to another midshipman, who was ordered to go on board one of the convoy to give some instructions, and said, “Thompson, the first lieutenant desires you will attend below to the stowing away of the

boatswain's stores just come on board, and I am to go round the convoy." Whereupon Thompson dived below, glad enough to escape a drizzling rain, and Weazel got out of the ship in order to let the captain's rage subside a little before he faced him.

"Mr. Weazel, sir," replied the midshipman of the watch, "is just gone in the jolly-boat on duty."

"That is a little scamp, that Weazel!" continued the captain; "but I'll make an officer and a gentleman of him yet. Mr. Murray, I am excessively displeased with you, because I had hoped that from your situation in life you would have been above such low conduct. A gentleman indeed who drives up to the George with four horses to his carriage, twelve hours afterwards to be fighting like a common chimney-sweep! For shame, sir, for shame! Where's Mr. Hammerton?"

"Here, sir," replied Hammerton.

"How came you, sir, last night to disobey my orders? Did I not tell you to take care of this youngster,—not to lose sight of him, to

take him on board, and to deliver certain messages to the first lieutenant?"

"Yes, sir," replied Hammerton, "you certainly did; and I only left Mr. Murray whilst he prepared his unpacked trunks to go on board; and thinking some of the midshipmen might want a passage, I went to the Fountain."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Hammerton," interrupted the captain, "to make my gig the midshipmen's passage-boat: I hope this will not happen again. Take this youngster under your charge. You know his failings; mind! I look to you for their correction. If I find him at any of his school-tricks here, he shall not escape the proper punishment, nor you my severest reproof. Why did you allow this battle to take place?"

"Mr. Murray struck Mr. Weazel, the blow was returned, and the mischief was done before I could interfere."

"And pray who had the best of it?" continued the captain.

"Mr. Murray, sir," replied Hammerton.

“ Let me hear no more of it.—Mr. Rackum, turn the hands up !—up anchor !”

Mr. Rackum, the boatswain, wound his call, and the tramp of the men followed the command. Immediately the bars were shipped, the cable brought to the messenger, the order to heave round given ; then the fife again struck up, and in five minutes the Tribune was lying at a short stay peak, and the signal was up for the convoy to weigh. During this time Mr. Weazel had got on board, and crept to his station abaft the mizen-mast, where he kept dodging the captain so as to keep out of sight. “ Loose sails !” was no sooner given as an order, before Weazel made a run at the mizen-rigging, and got safely housed in the top before the captain had seen him.

“ Ready forward !” said the first lieutenant ;
“ ready on the main-topsail-yard ! ready abaft !”

“ All ready !” squeaked Weazel.

The captain looked aloft, directly he heard the voice “ Let fall sheet home !” The topsails were shortly at the masthead ; the yards braced for canting the ship to port ; the bars again

shipped ; the anchor aweigh catted, fished ; and his Majesty's ship Tribune, under her three topsails and jib, stood out towards St. Helen's, her ensign and pendant blowing proudly out. When clear of Spithead, the Tribune hove-to. By this time every rope was in its place, flemished down—excepting the clue garnets, which were kept ready for running ; the watch called, and only one boat alongside—that boat was retained by the captain, in order to send some letter by the night's post.

“ Mr. Murray,” he said as he descended the companion, “ have you written to your father ? ”

“ No, sir,” replied Murray.

“ No, sir ! ” repeated the captain : “ is it possible that you have already forgotten his injunctions ? Come into my cabin, sir, and write to him directly.”

Murray went down ; and when the paper and ink were placed before him, he kept biting the end of the pen, not knowing how to begin.

“ Have you done ? ” said the captain as he took his eye off his own letter, yet continuing to write.

“ I don’t know, sir, what to say.”

“ You are not such a fool as that, Mr. Murray,” replied the captain. “ Tell him you have joined your ship—that your captain has overlooked your first fault—that the ship is under weigh for Halifax; and give him some general idea of your feelings since you have been on board. Why, you have enough to say to fill a ship’s muster-book. Come, look sharp—I shall not keep the boat for you; and mind, sir, I expect you to be ready when I am.”

The idea once given, Murray’s own talent supplied the rest, and he gave vent to his feelings in the following letter, almost the first he had ever written to his father, beyond the half-yearly announcement of when the holidays were to commence—a kind of up-and-down pleasurable toil, in which more paper is wasted and more pens nibbed than in one day’s hard work in any office in London.

“ MY DEAR FATHER,—I suppose Benjamin, if he did not forget it on the road, told you

that I got safe to Portsmouth, and very nearly got safe back again : the fact is, if that old blockhead had moved his stumps properly, I should 'now have been in Grosvenor-square, wishing to be where I now am. The captain has desired me to write to you ; so I do it, although I have nothing to say, excepting that I have already been in two rows—fought one battle and got a dark eye,—but I beat my adversary. I can't help telling you that I think you have behaved very badly to me, and you must have written all about the business to the captain ; for this morning, when he put me under the care of that yellow-faced fellow Hammerton, he said, ' If I find him at any of his school-tricks here, he 'shall not escape the proper punishment.' I think it very ill-natured of you, who told me how much you had my interest at heart, to have written this to the captain ; and certainly, if you continue to write like this. I know I shall never get over it. I hope you are better, and that you will not forget me : you had better direct your letters to Halifax—that is the place the captain's are to be sent

to. As to him, I think he is the worst-looking man I ever saw : he speaks always as if he were going to swallow one up ; and when he comes on board we are all obliged to go upstairs in the wet and take our hats off whilst he comes up the side. He found fault with me, Mr. Weazel, the boy I fought with, and Hammer-ton, and then turned his hands up with the boatswain : I don't like him at all. He is now sitting opposite to me, every two minutes looking up to see that I am writing, and he watches me as if I was going to rob him. The boat is waiting for this, and the captain has done his letter, therefore I cannot tell you any more news, because he won't let me : he says the boat shan't wait for any midshipman's scrawls. If all your friends are like him and Hammer-ton, I don't want to extend my acquaintance. I am determined to do all I can to get sent back again ; although I should like to be able to find fault with everybody, and have everybody take their hats off when they speak to me. Your dutiful son,

WALTER MURRAY."

“Have you finished your letter?” said the captain.

“Yes, sir,” said Walter as he folded it up.

“What have you told your father?” continued the captain.

“Just what you told me, sir;—that I was on board, and that we were going to Nova Scotia, and that he had better direct his letters to Halifax.”

“What did you say about me, sir?”

Murray looked like a criminal as he answered, “Nothing very particular, sir.”

“Let me see the letter.” Murray hesitated. “Why, I don’t want to read your rubbish, you young suspicious monkey! I want to add one word to your old father, and tell him what *I* think of *you*; which, from what has happened, will not be the most flattering portrait that I hope I shall be able to make of you; and if I fail, I can hand you over to Captain C., that gentleman you had the pleasure of meeting at dinner: if he cannot tame you, by the powers! you must be worse than an hyena.”

The captain took the letter, turned it back, and added,

“Your son is a boy of high spirit, which he has already proved; he will do well enough after the sea-sickness has moderated his bile. I will take every care of him, and rest assured he shall write to you often. I have no doubt, from Hammerton’s account, that he will like the life you have chosen for him: there are always a few rough steps at first, but when we get upon the level, the service is smooth enough. We are now under sail. I trust to hear better accounts of your health, and to return after a prosperous trip about the latter end of January.”

The letter was folded, sealed, and sent; Captain Barker read his additions to Murray, saying, “I have written just what I think of you. Now, sir, take yourself off! Ask Mr. Hammerton about your station, and mind you are always to be found in it. And here—stop a minute—I have heard you are rather addicted to telling lies. Now, as sure as I catch you out in one—ay, of the most trivial

kind,—I will have you married before your father's consent can arrive; and you may ask Mr. Weazel to introduce you to one of the gunner's daughters."

"He offered," replied Murray with the most innocent face in the world, "to do it this morning, and sent one of the men to the gunner, sir, to tell him that I should be happy to make her acquaintance."

The captain could not resist smiling, and replied, "His introduction will not signify so much as mine. You will dine with me to-day. Mind, I have forgiven your first fault: beware of the second. Be off!"

CHAPTER VI.

Departure of the Fleet.—The first Dinner at the Captain's table.

“WELL,” thought Murray as he got clear of the cabin-door, “this is a strange kind of life I have embarked in! I hardly dare open my mouth for fear of saying something wrong, and I always appear to be in somebody’s way.—There,—thank you, sir,—I am very much obliged to you for that!” said he, as a sailor banged a wet swab across his stockings: the fact is that Robert Dunlap was swabbing the larboard side of the waist with his back to the cabin-door, and as he lashed the swab from side to side of him, he stepped backwards, of course not seeing those behind him, who ought to have kept clear of him.

“Begs your pardon, *sir*,” said the sailor as

he touched his hair with his right hand; "I did not see you, *sir*."

Somehow this little event was consolatory to Murray; there was evidently great respect in the manner with which the man addressed him; and if his pride had been mortified before, it received some soothing from the words of the sailor. Shortly afterwards Murray went on deck. The last boat had left, the main-topsail was filled, and the ship, about two points off the wind, was standing out from the land. The convoy were crowding all sail, and the *Tribune* resembled the schoolmistress of a country village, who sees all her little ones walking before she herself moves. Murray was standing abaft the lee-side by the taffrail, watching the town of Portsmouth, which every moment grew less and less to the eye. Before him was one large world of water, into which he was rushing apparently blindfolded; whilst behind him grew less and less in the distance all he knew of life—of home—of happiness. Yet Walter shed no tear: nor did he, boy as he was, look forward with any fear as to the result; he

felt assured from what he had seen below that he would always have fair play shown him,—that Hammerton, whom he hated most cordially, would not allow him to be ill-treated by those stronger than himself, and for those who were his equal in size and strength he was a match. Still, however, he kept his eye upon the lessening shore, lost in a kind of pleasant meditation which even the trifling motion of the ship had not disturbed, until at last objects grew less distinct and were forming themselves into one long loom of land,—the town—the ships—the shore, alike undistinguishable to the naked eye; and Murray had no telescope to bring objects closer.

“Don’t you dine with the captain to-day?” said Weazel as he tapped Murray on the shoulder.

“Yes,” said Murray, starting from his reverie. “Why?”

“I only wanted to know if I could be of any use to you: I mean, if you haven’t got your proper dress, I might be able to assist you.”

“ I have got everything, I believe,” said Murray : “ I suppose I have only to walk in as I am.”

“ —And then you will walk out again immediately. Why, you must go in full uniform ! A dinner on board a ship is a kind of state affair : in merchant ships they call it the state cabin ; and in a frigate the captain is a king, and always has proper respect shown him. I suppose you have got your knee-breeches and buckles ?”

Murray looked at his own legs, and smiled as he said, “ Why, Weazel, I fancy it would be no common tailor to make knee-breeches fit me !”

“ Why, to be sure,” said Weazel, “ it would puzzle a shore-going snip ; but we have one who will do it for you quickly enough. Let ’s see,—there ’s four bells striking now.”

“ I only hear one bell,” replied Murray.

“ It is striking four times, and that means two o’clock. At six bells the captain dines ; you will hear the drum beat : you must be dressed in knee-breeches, silk stockings, buckles,

a long coat, your cocked hat and sword, your hair powdered and dressed, and with ruffles to your sleeves. Have you got all those things?"

"Not one but the cocked hat and sword;—I may have a pair of silk stockings: but as to the rest, I have seen them, to be sure, when my father went to the Lord Mayor's feast; but for one of my age to have such things, it never entered my head."

"Well, Murray, it's no use thinking about it; you must remedy the omission by using a little despatch. Let me see,—there's Strop the ship's barber, he of course has hair-powder; if not, you can buy some—Scales always has plenty of that. Then your confounded long trousers, we had better look after that first; I'll send one of the mizen-top-men with you, for I can't leave the deck—it is my watch: do you go below, get out your best pantaloons and give them to the lad; I'll tell him to take them to the tailor, and get you fitted out at once."

"Why," said Murray, "can't you lend me

a pair without altering mine? yours would fit me—you are just about the size.”

“Very true,” replied Weazel; “I have a pair,—I will send them to you: but now, look sharp. Here, you Maxwell, show this gentleman to Mr. Rackum’s cabin; and tell the ship’s barber he wants his hair curled and powdered. Look sharp—down you go, Murray: attend to him, Maxwell, do you hear?”

Away went the unconscious Murray down the after-companion; whilst Maxwell, who had received his lesson from Weazel when in the mizen-top, jumped down the main-hatchway and lodged Murray in Rackum’s cabin; the boatswain being on deck, and not very likely to leave it until they piped to supper. When Murray was shut in, away went Maxwell for Strop; but Weazel, always active when any of his own fun was in the wind, had already told the barber what he was to do, and the man, like all seamen who enjoy the frolic of having a greenhorn *in a line*, jumped down in the steerage, and appeared with an old comb, a pair of gaping scissors, and two pieces of

rusty ramrods lashed together to represent curling-tongs. Murray told him to dress his hair in the manner the other midshipmen wore theirs when they dined with the captain.

“Ay, ay, sir,” said Strop. “Have you your powder-box and a puff, sir?”

“No,” said Murray, not willing to appear ignorant of customs: “my foolish servant forgot to send them. I suppose you have some in your shop for sale?”

“Plenty, for the matter of that, sir, of puffs; but you must buy the powder at another place.”

“Oh yes,” interrupted Murray, “at Mr. Scales’s; Mr. Weazel told me he sold powder: can you show me the way?”

“Certainly, sir,” said Jack Strop, who managed to keep his countenance and act his part uncommonly well: “this way if you please, sir,—down this ladder, sir; you will find him in his shop.” And forthwith Mr. Murray descended the after-ladder into the cockpit; and there he saw Mr. Scales sitting apparently at his shop with a book in which he was writing, and to all intents and purposes apparently a shop-

keeper ; his store presenting, to the astonishment of Murray, candles, sugar, raisins, and divers other useful articles and *comestibles*.

“ Have you any hair-powder for sale ?” said Murray.

“ Yes, sir,” replied Scales (he had been tutored by Weazel) : “ how much do you want ?”

“ Only a small quantity,” replied Murray, “ to dress my hair to-day.”

“ I always keep it in small parcels ; here is a paper quite sufficient, sir, and by your leave I will enter your name on my books—we can settle the account another time.”

Murray took the flour, thanked Mr. Scales for his obliging attention, and returned to Rackum’s cabin. Here he found Weazel, who had brought in a pair of knee-breeches, and had affixed two large sailor’s silver buckles into the shoes.

“ Get your silk stockings, Murray,” said Weazel, “ and get your lower rigging up before you decorate your mast-head. That’s your sort—what a leg for a boot ! it’s lucky

green is not in fashion, or the pigs might mistake them for cabbage-stalks ! Now then, Strop, set to work : why, your curling-tongs are cold !—five bells is gone this quarter of an hour, and the roll has beat for the servants. Well done, Murray, clap your legs well through the breeches : now then for the shoes ! Why, you look like an admiral !—are you any relation to Lord Howe ? That 's well done, Strop ; you have made his head for all the world like an overgrown cauliflower ;—that will do : Mr. Murray will call at your shop and pay you to-morrow ; you live in Tier-street, No. 20, I believe ;—we won't forget. Now then for your waistcoat ;—that 's beautiful ! Your coat ?”

“ I have got no coat—I have only got a *coatee*.”

“ Well, on with that. There now—pull your ruffles down. Here 's your sword : why, it 's long enough to toast cheese at the galley-fire without burning your fingers. And as a topper over all, here 's your three-cornered scraper : you must carry that under your arm.—Let 's see,” continued Weazel, talking to allow the time to

creep on :—" Mind how you behave at dinner ! I know you are a man of high family ; but it's not every man who dines with kings. You must never answer the captain—only bow, and whatever he offers you must take.—How do you feel in your full dress ?"

" Why, I feel very much like a fool," said Murray ; " and all I want to make myself more ridiculous is a large nosegay, and then I should be as much like one of the gilded donkeys which dance round a jack-in-the-green on May-day as needs be."

" I forgot the nosegay, Murray, or we might have got one from the captain's garden in the mizen-top.—There's *The Roast Beef!* Now run into the cabin, and never mind the men looking at you ;—go right in, for sometimes the midshipmen turn out to see how a new-comer looks in full uniform. Now then, skim up the after-hatchway, and mind what I told you."

Murray, who had witnessed the great respect paid by the first lieutenant, of whom he stood in considerable awe, to the captain, and had seen with his own eyes how all bowed to the

king afloat, had never allowed it to enter his mind that a boy like himself could be too absurdly dressed ; and few can imagine who have not themselves seen, how very ridiculous any one looks in knee-breeches and buckles, and with a short coat. He bustled up the after-hatchway, and never heeded the shout of laughter by which he was assailed. The sentinel opened the door with a wonderful grin upon his countenance, and Mr. Murray stood in the fore-cabin, the captain being in the after one waiting for his guests. Hammerton was likewise invited, and was at that time inquiring for Murray, when Weazel said in the most innocent manner, " I believe he is gone up—I think I saw him go up the after-hatchway just now."

" Did you tell him," said Hammerton, " to wait for the first lieutenant ?"

" No," said Weazel ; " I think he is too great a nob to wait for any one ; but I suppose he will smooth down, like the rest of us. It's quite astonishing," said the young mid, " how being elevated high above the quarter-

deck makes a man wish for a more lowly situation. There goes the first lieutenant."

Hammerton followed his senior officer, taking it for granted that Murray had gone before, and arrived at the fore-cabin just as the captain opened his door, and beheld the unfortunate victim of Weazel's malice, his first lieutenant, and Hammerton, all at the same moment. He immediately, although he could not entirely command his countenance—turned his eye towards Hammerton in order to ask how this could be, and he privy to it. Hammerton, seeing his protégé dressed in so ludicrous a style, could not restrain his laughter or conceal his mortification: he merely said, "I assure you, sir, I know nothing whatever of this foolish business." The first lieutenant gave a look of reproach at the three servants, who very soon saw it was possible to laugh the wrong side of a face; and the captain, with that kindness which marked him through life, taking no notice whatever of Hammerton's remark, said, "Sit here, Mr. Murray," placing him on his right hand.

Murray knew something was wrong ; for he was quick enough to perceive the almost suppressed titter, and to remark that Hammerton and the first lieutenant neither had powdered heads nor knee-breeches. The captain's manner soon overcame his first shyness, and Murray began to feel more at ease ; although, whenever he caught the eye of any present, he saw the broad grin which was over the countenance. By degrees the captain wormed out of Murray the author of the trick, and the manner in which it had been carried on : nor could they exactly blame Weazel, for the joke was well conceived and happily executed ; the manner in which it had been conducted—the privacy of the boatswain's cabin so as to keep others out of the secret, was a happy thought ; but the simultaneous roar, which even the captain's presence could not control, and in which he joined, when Murray said that the hairdresser lived at No. 20, Tier-street, and that Mr. Scales had provided him with the hair-powder, opened Murray's eyes to the tricks which had been played him.

CHAPTER VII.

Night at Sea.—A Squall.—A Schooner upset, and the consequences.

THE captain was really not sorry for the trick played upon his young midshipman: he knew his character well, and foresaw that the laugh this would occasion, would humble the pride of the boy, and perhaps ultimately do him more real service than Murray himself was aware of. Hammerton knew that the play was only begun, and that Mr. Weazel would certainly be kind enough to have a full attendance of midshipmen and men to welcome the young courtier when he came out of the cabin, that minute being pretty well known. But here he was overreached by the captain, who, when the first lieutenant retired, took

Murray into his after-cabin, told him the trick which had been played upon him, and recommended him to take no notice whatever of it, but to run below and change his dress, when the hands were turned up — “reef topsails;” and thus frustrated Mr. Weazel’s kind intentions. The first lieutenant reported all present and sober at quarters; the order was given for the signal to be hoisted for the convoy to close round the commodore, and to take one reef in the topsails.

“And now,” said the captain as he heard the men rush up the ladders when the boatswain turned the hands up, “do you run below, and be quick: beat that flour out of your head, put on the clothes you wore this morning, and join in the laugh against yourself.”

Down dived Mr. Murray; but he soon found that Weazel never slept over fun. The captain’s kindness was almost frustrated by the boy; he was resolved to have a good laugh even if it finished in a good thrashing, and he took care to stow away Murray’s dress. This, however,

was soon remedied ; and as Weazel was desired to remain at the mizen-topmast-head to count the convoy, although they were close alongside the frigate, he had not the satisfaction of seeing the consummation of his plan ; and one hour before he was called down from his elevation, Murray was rigged according to orders, and was busy in making himself a sailor.

The night was nearly calm ; the frigate, under easy sail, crept silently through the water at the rate of a knot and a half, and the convoy as silently followed the commodore. No sea ran to sicken Murray with his new profession — the stars were forth, and the moon shone beautifully on the smooth water. In such moments there are thoughts which steal over us and win us from ourselves ; and those who have braved longest the perils of a sailor's life, feel most exquisitely the glory of the calm night, when the stars are reflected in the vast deep, and when the sea takes "the moods, and wears the colours of her mistress—the sky." He who first perils his existence on this mighty

and immense mass of waters,—for, as Campbell says,

“ The eagle’s vision cannot take it in ;
The lightning’s wing, too weak to sweep its space,
Sinks half-way o’er it like a wearied bird ;—”

experiences a solemn feeling of awe, of wonder—nay, often-times of fear. And yet, lost in the very magnificence of this image of eternity—this throne of the Invisible, man feels himself a prouder being, in the knowledge that the science of his fellow-creatures has taught him to explore its wondrous depths,—to steer uninjured by rocks or islands through its pathless desert, and to draw a higher and a better notion of the glory and divinity of his Maker by the never-ending wonders which are presented to him. The poor in pocket and in mind, condemned from youth to age to toil, perhaps in the darkness of a mine, excavating the ore, and returning when oppressed with fatigue to the shed which serves him for shelter ; the mechanic, who from daylight to dark continues his labour in one city ; the husbandman, who ploughs the field and sows the seed, who

reaps the harvest and who stacks the hay,—can never have that exalted notion of man, and of man's works, as he whose whole life is one scene of continued change; who is associated to-day with the dark, sulky negro of the Gold Coast, —with the gay Frenchman to-morrow; who sees the pigmy race of Mexico or the giants of Patagonia,—much less can he form a just estimate of the power of the Divinity. The wonders of creation are to be seen in the ocean, and in the stupendous mountains of the Andes, or the still prouder Himalayas. It is in sights like these that man is convinced of his own insignificance, and yet of his own power: it is when standing on the Andes, and seeing a city like a speck, that he feels his vast inferiority. But he becomes conscious of the greatness of his intellect when he measures the heights above him with mathematical exactness, or looks for the moment—the well-calculated moment, when a comet shall return and be visible. Oh! the delight—the calm delight of pondering on such sublimity, supported by the still ocean! when the mind, in harmony with

the scene, calmly surveys the greatness of the works of God.

The Tribune was a thirty-six gun frigate,—a small, compact, trim vessel. Her commander was a man of sterling worth and tried experience; and he was on the present occasion intrusted with the protection of a valuable convoy, bound, some to Quebec, and others to Newfoundland. Her orders were comprised in a few words,—“to see the convoy safe to its destination, and to await further orders from the admiral in Halifax.”

There is no service so much detested by active officers in command of frigates, as that of counting every night and morning a certain number of merchant vessels in which they have no personal interest. The vigilance required is excessive: the drudgery of eternal signals to the slower sailers—the constant reproof to the inattentive masters, who, directly darkness allows an opportunity, edge away to make a run, not liking to be detained by their heavier companions, and anxious to avail themselves of the first of the market to

which they are consigned—are everlasting. The fore-castle gun is always in requisition, and the flags for the convoy to make more sail might always be kept bent and ready for hoisting. In war—and convoy frigates are useless except during a war—that which is the constant wish and thought of all must be relinquished. No suspicious sail must entice the frigate from her convoy : the sneaking schooner, edging perhaps toward the vessel farthest from the commodore, may be chased, but not pursued ; she may be scared away—not followed : and even the rich Batavia-man—the ship nearly sinking with wealth, must pass without obstruction, if in seeking her detention the convoy are likely to be run out of sight. Talk of patience ! place a keen cruiser of a captain in a fast frigate with a slow convoy, and if he keeps his temper more than twenty-four hours, he will die of the effort the minute afterwards.

Murray from day to day grew in seamanship ; he liked it wonderfully. It is true his never-sleeping annoyer had played him another trick by sending him to Mr. Scales to

buy a quadrant. Mr. Scales had none in his shop, but recommended him to Ropeyarn, the boatswain's yeoman, who was unfortunately out of the article, but believed that the gentleman could be supplied by Mr. Chips, who kept a large carpenter's store and shop near the fore-hold. Again, however, was he to be disappointed: Mr. Chips had sold his last to Mr. Weazel, but knew that Mr. Handspike next door retained one. This, however, could not be sold without the consent of the captain of the fore-top, Daniel Munroe, who was to be found in his house, of which his rank was the name, or in the garden which surrounded the huge *agave america* which grew from its centre. To mount the fore-rigging was no easy undertaking, but Murray persevered; and as he nearly reached the abode of the gentleman to whom he was despatched, he found himself lashed to the rigging, only to be released by paying a certain sum, which was to entitle him to free ingress and egress to and from the above-named garden, and give him the right of plucking and eating

any fruit he might find therein. The first step made aloft soon prompted Murray, under the encouragement of Hammerton, to use his best endeavours to reach the mast-head. The difficulty once overcome, was succeeded by the pleasurable sensation of surmounting a difficulty and of getting forward in the service;—nay, in spite of all the tricks of the youngsters, the hardship of the life, the discomforts to which the spoilt boy was subjected, he grew fonder and fonder of the service, and before the first breeze and sea-sickness were over, he had laughed at the prejudices of his youth, and was always to be seen where the greatest danger was to be encountered.

Boys of this stamp, however much addicted to pecuniary meanness, always do well on board a ship: they soon get the rough husk rubbed off, and by associating with lads of spirit and enterprise, partake a little of their companions' feelings, and soon become well disposed towards each other, and often establish friendships which last through life. There was one person, however, who, kind and obliging as he was, Murray

hated: this was Hammerton. The feeling was engendered when he struck him, and became rooted in his mind when he heard himself placed under his control;—nay, the very patronising manner which Murray imagined to be practised by Hammerton when he interfered to stop a quarrel, or to thrust himself into it in order to keep Murray out of it, was worm-wood to the proud boy, who considered this officious intermeddler as a man supported by his father, and whose family might be reduced to beggary at the whim or caprice of Sir Hector.

Murray controlled his feelings; but the hatred increased—the blow was never to be forgotten; and although others of the oldsters pulled his ears or slapped his face, the injury was forgotten when the pain was over: but towards Hammerton he had quite a different feeling. Time, instead of obliterating, only strengthened his hatred;—kindness, instead of soothing this unfortunate disgust, only rendered it more lasting, and rooted it more deeply. Hammerton perceived it through the disguise

by which Murray attempted to conceal it ; and not feeling any animosity against Murray, and being well aware that Sir Hector was his best friend,—for from him alone had he any hopes of advancement, whilst his father, mother, and sisters subsisted upon the bounty of the baronet,—he would not allow himself to be deterred in his endeavours to teach Murray his duty, or slacken his kindness even when that kindness was refused. Murray was in Hammerton's watch. If it rained, Hammerton would ask the lieutenant to allow Murray to go below ; but the latter, with determined spite, would rather stand on the lee gangway, and catch every drop which fell from the mainsail, than go below. If the officer of the watch was solicited, and gave him a hint to be off, he was in his hammock a minute afterwards. Such was his dislike to Hammerton, that he would sacrifice personal comfort even when the favour granted was one which was commonly accorded to every youngster in the ship, rather than accept it from him who was in reality his truest friend. Such are the contradictions of human

nature, that in many cases we would rather receive the poisoned cup from an enemy than the most delicious nectar from our friend: it is a blindness of heart from which we may well earnestly desire to be delivered.

The Tribune had now been about a fortnight at sea, when the morning of the 2nd of November dawned upon her. During these fifteen days the convoy had nearly reached the Western Islands. Murray had overcome all disposition to sea sickness, and was as much of a sailor as his short apprenticeship would allow. The clouds which at daylight began to rise suddenly from the north-west soon banked up heavily to leeward. At this time the wind was in the south-east quarter, and the convoy were going nearly before the wind; the frigate, under her topsails and foresail, making and shortening sail occasionally to keep close to her convoy. About seven o'clock the officer of the watch apprised Captain Barker that the wind showed every disposition to shift—that the scud aloft was going at a very considerable rate towards the south-east, and that

a heavy squall was brewing ahead. The signal was instantly made for the convoy to shorten sail. The foresail of the Tribune was hauled up and a reef taken in the topsails. Every preparation was made for the coming squall, and finally the ship was brought to the wind and hove-to. Several of the sternmost ships—for in spite of the vigilance and attention of the different officers of the watches, the convoy was much separated and many ships far astern—disregarded the signal, and still kept their studding sails set in order to close the commodore. Some who must have seen the approaching breeze waited until it should arrive before they set seriously to work to reef their topsails; thus giving their crews about eight times the labour they otherwise would have had, and ultimately paying severely for their want of attention and discretion. About nine it fell a dead calm. In the south-east the sky was clear and cloudless; whilst in the opposite direction, dark, heavy purple masses rolled over each other, more unnatural in appearance owing to a lighter cloud

covering the curling fluid as if with a veil. Shooting from this dark heap of clouds, some few were separated, and rose to a higher region of the air, in which they were dissipated and blown out like mares' tails, passing rapidly over the convoy: whilst on the water, and about a mile from the ships, the sea appeared as if covered with a thick white haze, before which seemed a dark line of black. As this was evidently no common squall, the hands were turned up, the topsails lowered and made as secure as possible, the yards were squared, the jib hauled down, and the fore-topmast staysail set,—the Tribune lying at this time with her starboard broadside to the approaching storm. Murray had never seen a sight like this; and much as he had read in books of fiction, of waves rolling mountains high—of storms, of dangers, of perils encountered by seamen, yet he was by no means prepared for the silent approach of the enemy. There was evidently much apprehension on the countenances of several of the old seamen, and the first lieutenant was overheard to say

that he was apprehensive the convoy were too close together, fearing that if a thick haze came on with the squall many ships would run on board of each other. It was in vain now to attempt to remedy this oversight : it was a calm with the squall coming gradually up as if to burst upon them ; and from the manner in which the dark cloud had blown over them—the immense rapidity with which it swept aloft, it was most evident that it would be a serious storm.

About half-past nine it burst upon the ships, and no pen can describe—no words give the most faint outline of the tremendous force with which it assailed the convoy. The Tribune, although so well prepared, suffered much : her main-topsail was shaken to ribands, the fore-topmast staysail disappeared in a moment, and the fore-top-gallant mast was carried away ; the ship heeled over to port and lay like a wreck upon the waters. Her loss, however, was trifling, compared to that suffered by those around her.

There was in the convoy a smart-looking

schooner,—a vessel always in her station, and one frequently sent astern to whip up the idle and the inattentive. This schooner was the *Jane*. Before the squall burst, her commander tried all in his power to creep a little ahead of the frigate in order to avoid falling on board of her: indeed, so close was she, that she had been hailed to that effect by Captain Barker. When the first effect, which was momentary, had passed off, the schooner was seen close to the *Tribune* on her beam-ends and sinking. A cry louder than the wind reached the frigate, and the echo of “The schooner is upset!” was repeated fore and aft the frigate. Instantly some daring hands leapt into the small cutter on the larboard quarter. Hammerton was seen casting off the after stopper; whilst, in the bow of the boat, Weazel, who was quite a boy, was observed using his utmost efforts to cast off the foremost stopper. Four or five men had got into the cutter, some casting off the gripes, others getting the stretchers clear to fend her off from the ship’s side; and at this busy moment it was in vain that the

master, a good seaman, declared that it was inevitable ruin to lower the boat—that she would be blown away to leeward and be of no service whatever: his voice was lost amidst the whistling hiss of the wind, as it surged through the rigging. At this instant Murray had got upon the hammocks and scrambled outside the mizen rigging, intending to reach the boat, unequal as he was to cope with such danger; for a fortnight's apprenticeship in light breezes will not enable a seaman to dare every peril in a gale. He still persevered; but at the moment when he reached over to touch the gunwale of the boat in order to throw himself into her, where he would have been useless, the gripes were cut off, and owing to the laying over of the frigate the boat immediately swung away from the chains, and Murray dropped overboard between the space.

On occasions like these there are hundreds to give assistance, and all ready to bear witness of exertions either successfully or fruitlessly made. The deep-sea lead-line, which had been kept

on the reel, was hanging in its beackets under the cleat of the larboard main-brace. The end was thrown into the cutter by Mr. Clubb, the master, before Murray fell overboard, and it was in Hammerton's hand when he saw the accident. The stopper was off; but owing to some confusion in the coil of the boat's fall, they would not lower her; or perhaps the man at the foremost fall had perceived that Weazel was not so quick, not being so strong as his messmate; and whilst another hand stronger than the youngster's took his place, Weazel was bundled very unceremoniously on board again. He had beckoned, for it was useless calling, to the man at the after fall to hold on. There was not a minute's time—nay, nor half a minute's in the performance of a duty which it takes much time to describe. Hammerton, finding his order to "lower away" was unheeded, if not unheard, grasped the lead-line firmly, and was overboard in a second. Murray could swim a little; but the ship was drifting to leeward fast, and he was under the larboard counter, when Hammerton caught hold of him,

and passing the rope under his arms, made it fast. Strange as it may seem, Murray actually tried to disengage himself from the rope ; and even in that struggle, when his life was far from secure, he actually shook off the hold of Hammerton, and saw the brave fellow, who had risked his own life to save his, drift round the stern, without once stretching out his hand to proffer assistance. Murray was saved : a bowline knot was passed down by the lead-line, which fell over his shoulders, and he was hauled on board ; but such was his hatred of Hammerton, that he never even inquired if he was saved, or spoke one word of encouragement to others who, more ready and willing than himself, would have thrown a grating or an oar to save their favourite. The boat was now in the water ; but all efforts were ineffectual to keep her head to wind : the spray blown from the ocean covered her as a tropical rain, and it was hard to say, if by the means attempted to rescue the men belonging to the *Jane*, the *Tribune* had not wilfully sacrificed her own. Hammerton was now far away on the

weather quarter, evidently getting much exhausted ; for the spray was so heavy, that if he had attempted to swim head to wind, he must have been drowned. The boat's crew, regardless of the distance, which now became great, still plied their oars and bent their backs to save Hammerton ; the schooner being in the same direction, but a little to windward of him. She of course did not drift so fast to leeward as the frigate ; and the last time either boat or Hammerton were seen, the one was pulling in a right line to save the other. Murray had watched the exertion with intense interest, nor did he turn away from the last gaze of the man he hated until the increased distance and the thickness of spray hid him from his sight.

The different ships of the convoy were much injured : more than four fell foul of each other ; but the squall came on so fast, that one dismasted, and another with a signal of distress flying, were the only two which were observed on board the Tribune. Vain and useless were it to attempt to depict the scene. In vain was

the shriek for assistance uttered, the uplifted hand of terror as a signal ;—in vain did those who still clung to the wreck of the *Jane* scream 'to those who risked their lives to save them,—in vain was the eager supplication to Heaven—the hasty repetition of the too-long neglected prayer ! And, oh ! the bitter moment of memory, when even Hope withdrew her last light, and the *Jane* and her crew were immersed below the water ! There sunk the father, the husband, the friend, the brave seaman—the beloved of many ! and no imaginary tablet can be upraised amidst the rolling waves to point the grave of that gallant crew ! When the sun dawned on that morning, and whilst the crew were engaged in the usual avocations of the seaman's life, little did they, in the full vigour of health, imagine that before the noonday sun should shine to guide the vessel on the pathless deep, that vessel should be a wreck ! her sails scattered, her hull sunk, themselves drowned !—cut off in a moment when danger was unthought of and preparation deemed useless.

The crew of the cutter saw the schooner disappear. Hammerton, for the minute, had been rescued from the danger which assailed him; but his situation in the boat was apparently a mere prolongation of very uncertain existence,—for when he recovered himself from the giddy effect of unusual exertion, no ship could be discovered as a welcome home to the wearied crew — not a speck on the now contracted horizon could point a way for escape. Although the gallant fellows still plied their oars and kept the boat's head towards the part where they imagined their frigate to be, yet gradually they grew weary of the ineffectual labour, boated their oars, and looked at each other with despairing countenances.

On board the *Tribune* all was exertion to recover the boat. The fury of the first squall being past, it was now possible to carry a little sail; but, owing to the fog which had thickened with the squall, all was uncertainty as to what was best to be done. To wear and make sail might be to cross the boat, pulling in an oppo-

site direction, besides the fear of running on board some of the convoy. It was useless to continue firing guns: the wind was so high that the noise of the explosion scarcely reached the taffrail, and it was evident that one hundred yards astern the sound could never reach. In the mean time, the sea had begun to run, and the danger grew more imminent. After a consultation with the first lieutenant and the master, it was resolved to keep the frigate as near her present position as possible, and if in half an hour's time no appearance of the boat became visible, to wear under a close-reefed main-topsail and foresail, and endeavour to preserve not an improbable distance from the scene of the calamity. This was no time for inactivity; the sails were reefed, and not an order was given without being followed by the continued disheartening question of "Can you see the boat?" Men were stationed in every part of the ship; but those aloft could not see so far as those on deck. The captain strained his eyes; glasses were

used, and as quickly laid aside. The guns were still fired however; the whole crew were on the alert. There was but one person below — it was Murray.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sir Hector Murray's visit to old Hammerton.—A melancholy Tale.

NEAR one of the prettiest towns in England, Taunton in Somersetshire, there *was*—for Time has not spared it—a neat white cottage. It stood near the high road, almost opposite to a splendid lodge which was the entrance to the estate of Sir Hector Murray. On one side was all the economical neatness of good taste reduced to circumscribed limits; on the other, all the display of riches. The small, neatly-gravelled pathway to the cottage was but the ghost of the broad road which led to the mansion of Sir Hector: still, however, the nicely-trained plants which grew in great luxuriance on the fertile ground gave rather an elegant appearance to the smaller abode, and

comfort was evidently to be found where riches could not command it. The leaves were now falling before the last of the autumnal gales; the blossoms had long since forsaken the plants; the azalia, which brightened in summer and spread its thick yellow blossoms, was now a leafless shrub; the gaudy peony, whose thick, deep flower had beautified the little gardens cut with scrupulous exactness from a small grass plat dignified as a lawn, was divested of its summer grandeur; the lively lilac, the golden showery laburnum, and all those millions of Nature's fairest ornaments, were fast assuming the cold deadness of winter; and even Somersetshire wore a certain periodical dulness which three months previously had been unknown.

It is strange, that at the season of the year when Nature puts on her richest dress as if to entice the intelligent and the curious to examine her, many human beings seem to shun the beauties which a bountiful Providence has spread over the land, and congregate in cities, to revel in crowded assemblies; but when, as if to warn man that he should seek the com-

panionship of his own fellow-mortals, the earth is covered with snow, or when the wintry showers descend in such torrents that exercise is debarred, — then, instead of seeking the warm cheerfulness of society, and enjoying the luxury which is concentrated in large communities, as if in contradiction to the law of Nature, the towns are deserted, and the country swarms with the tide of human beings.

This is neither the first nor the hundredth time that a similar remark has been made ; and on this subject, without derogating much from the stubborn opposition which characterises the English people, they might borrow a little wisdom from their long-hated neighbours the French. With us legislators pant in oppressive heat, instead of deliberating coolly on the measure before them ; and the best effort of eloquence falls dully upon the ear when oppressive heat relaxes the body and unstrings the mind.

It was about noon, as we have said, towards the close of autumn, that an old gentleman, dressed in deep mourning, and with a coun-

tenance manifesting woe and heaviness of heart, stood leaning over the cottage-gate, looking at a travelling-carriage which was approaching, and which stopped while the great gates of Sir Hector's estate opened to receive their master. Sir Hector, who saw old Mr. Hammerton, made him a bow of recognition, which was answered with much form by the old gentleman. As he lifted his hat, the long grey hairs, thin enough to be moved by any breeze, fell upon his shoulders; and a finer specimen of beneficence and benevolence never brightened the human countenance more than in the features of Mr. Hammerton.

Struck by the unusual figure before him, Sir Hector desired his servant to open the carriage-door; and descending with a proper slow and stately step, he bade his servants take the carriage home whilst he crossed the road; and extending his hand with much cordiality, he began, "It is many years, Mr. Hammerton, since I have had the pleasure of seeing you: I trust your health continues unimpaired, and that your wife and family are well."

Sir Hector paused for a reply, and was much disconcerted when he saw the old gentleman turn away and commence beating with his stick against the door. Almost immediately a beautiful little girl about ten years of age came running towards Mr. Hammerton; and after looking with an inquisitive glance, she turned to Sir Hector and said, "Papa, sir, is quite deaf: *I* can make him understand if you mention to me what you desire."

Sir Hector repeated his former question; the child by her fingers and signs made the old gentleman understand, and he answered—for he was not dumb—that he believed it was now twenty years since he had *seen* Sir Hector,—he therefore apologised for not having recognised him at first, but now gladly seized the opportunity of expressing his sincere thanks for the many kind and liberal proofs of friendship he had given him. Here he was interrupted by the baronet, who took the old man's hand and pressed it warmly in his own. The little girl stood interpreter to the following conversation:

"I have," said Sir Hector, "renewed our

acquaintance, Mr. Hammerton, in order, if possible, to convince you that, notwithstanding the little bickerings and acrimonious feeling which separated us, and which I am willing to believe originated in myself, the good wishes of my heart were ever warm towards you. Your son is on board the same ship as my son ; and I have placed Walter under the direction of your Frederic, thus bringing them together, in the hope that a permanent friendship may exist ; and further that, should I be suddenly cut off, this cottage and these grounds may be your undisturbed possession ; for I hear you have grown to this spot, and regard it with more than common affection."

"When I was in distress, Sir Hector," answered the old man, "you stepped forward : when greedy creditors would neither allow me time to repair the mischief, nor even give me a place in which to lay my head, you came forward and lent me this : when my wife,"—and here the old man became much affected,— "who now is an angel in heaven,—brought me this dear little child into the world, your liber-

ality supplied her with medical advice, and the dainties which affluence only can afford. From the first moment of my entering this abode—now sacred to me, since it is but a month since she who had contributed to my happiness, and bore without a murmur the increased infirmities and troubles of life, was taken from me,—you, although you concealed the donation, have regularly remitted me one hundred pounds a year. I was a stranger to you—had no tie, no relationship, no claim upon you ; I was relieved by you, when even my own family turned their backs upon me. Can you be surprised then that I should desire to end my days in this abode ? I would be a beggar for that favour ; and when I am gone, Frederic must be a father and protector to this dear little child ; and may the God of mercy shield her from the sufferings her parents have experienced !”

“ Fear not for her, my old friend, nor for your son : if I live, he shall be advanced in the service and placed beyond the chance of want ; he who is now a guide to my son shall not find me unmindful of his services, and I will

this evening add a codicil to my will, leaving in it an earnest request to my son that you and your family shall never be disturbed in this dwelling. You know they both have sailed — their destination is to Halifax.”

“ I know it,” replied Mr. Hammerton, “ for Frederic has written twice since he sailed. I suppose your son has not omitted to avail himself of the same opportunities ?”

“ I have not heard,” replied Sir Hector, “ since the day they sailed ;” and here the mortification of Sir Hector was visible.

“ I dare say,” interrupted Mr. Hammerton, “ that the poor fellow was sea-sick ; but of this you may rest assured, that he was going on well in his profession : my son particularly mentions that he was active and intelligent, and very careful to all that he desired. Besides, sir, when a youngster first enters the service, he generally has so much to do in his own ideas that some excuse will readily be made for him.”

“ How old are you, my pretty little girl ?” asked Sir Hector, willing to change a conver-

sation which did not exalt his son in his estimation.

“ I am just ten, sir,” replied the little dark-eyed beauty.

“ Just ten ?” replied the baronet : “ does that mean you are past ten, or nearly ten ?”

“ I shall be ten on the 2nd of November.” lisped Amelia.

“ I shall not forget your birth-day, I dare say,” said the baronet as he took a book from his pocket and made a memorandum : “ we shall be better friends and neighbours, I trust, for the future. And now, Mr. Hammerton, you must walk over with little Amelia and dine with me. I am a poor lone trunk now ; the prop which might have supported me has left me, and I find that wealth and large estates do not necessarily give either comfort or happiness : for, although I confess it is selfish to say so, I would relinquish nearly all to have my son near me to the end of my life. It is true I walk through large halls and splendid rooms ; but the voice of my child is wanting ; and you, Mr. Hammerton, have twice the

satisfaction in life, by having by your side one who must love and respect you, and whose little winning and affectionate look would chase away any gloom. But I must get out of this moody manner, and I doubt not your kindness will bestow a few moments on a man who has long respected you."

"I should be ungrateful, Sir Hector, if I did not acknowledge at all times your kindness to me."

"Then let me beg of you to acknowledge it by your silence upon that subject. Come, my little interpreter;—why, your fingers and your eyes would make any man understand a speech in parliament. Take my arm, Mr. Hammerton: I think I am strongest upon my legs, although the gout every now and then does all the mischief in its power, and whilst it makes them thicker makes them weaker. How long has your son been at sea, Mr. Hammerton?"

"Five years," replied the old gentleman; "and during that time I have only seen him once. He has seen some service: he was in

Howe's action, and escaped untouched. I put him with Barker, because that kind man, whom I knew under different circumstances, did not forget a former kindness and was anxious to requite it."

"If, Mr. Hammerton, the subject is not too painful to you, let me ask you how you became deaf? for when I knew you before, you heard as well as any man, and your age is not sufficient, without some sickness or some great nervous excitement, to have caused this infirmity."

"It is a melancholy tale, but it is soon told, Sir Hector. I had another son; — you may remember him, for he was alive when I last saw you. His name was Charles, and he was my eldest boy. During the period of my affluence, I had not withheld the benefits of education from him, and I saw the seeds of a refined mind gradually developing themselves in him. He was studious; I intended him for the church, in which I had some little interest; and looked forward with some hope that one day my son would become a distinguished minister of peace.

I often pictured to myself the pleasure I should experience in hearing the congregation as they crowded through the porch of the church express their admiration of the discourse, and from the poorer classes hear my son called as good as he was wise. His early habits of charity—his ceaseless regard for the poor—his solicitude for the sick—his mildness—his benevolence—all qualified him for the sacred profession he himself had chosen, and which should never be ventured on by the thoughtless lover of pleasure. I own to you, Sir Hector, I have a sovereign contempt for your sporting parson,—a man who crams his horse at a fence to keep pace with yelping dogs which run the faster the nearer they are to a death: nor can I think it consistent with the character of a minister of Christianity—one who should spare, not slay—to occupy his mornings in shooting. When the winter with all its rigour cramps the aged and the infirm, it is little consistent with the character of a minister of God to gallop over fields and waste his time in pursuing a poor and hunted creature; rather should he

then be striving to warm the hearts of his parishioners."

"Surely," said Sir Hector, "you would not debar the clergyman from all recreation?"

"Assuredly not. There is recreation for the mind in the solacing of others. I would not have him a weed to choke the exertions of the flowers around him, or by too much austerity rebuke the innocent gaieties of others. Those who think it a sin to smile on the Sabbath, I hold to be fanatics. Could we find one amongst all the fanatical preachers who would lie down for years upon a bed of spikes for the love of God? I have always remarked that your over-pious person has generally been the greatest sinner; and as a racket-ball rebounds the farthest the harder it is propelled, so the reaction is the greater in proportion to the extent of crime. No man has a greater regard for the proper performance of religious duties than I have—no one a more thorough contempt for those who arrogate to themselves a superiority from the nonsensical belief in an inward light, or

who proudly, impiously,—nay, blasphemously, sit in judgment upon others, and denounce them as the children of Satan—the infants of the devil.”

“ I confess myself much of your opinion, Mr. Hammerton,” remarked Sir Hector ; “ and I think the parents who allow their children to enter the church, knowing that from their manner of life they are unfit to uphold its sacred character, are more to blame than the eager young man who is anxious to hear his own voice in public and to read his own production to his attentive congregation. — But you have been led from your subject in your zeal for the church.”

“ True, Sir Hector,—apparently so ; but, in reality, it was done on purpose to save myself the repetition of anguish. You have a right to know all, however, which concerns myself ; and as I am now somewhat prepared for the task, you must bear the infliction of its recital.

“ My son was about eighteen, as handsome as ever a mother could wish ; and, as if pre-

paring himself for the honourable profession he had chosen, he had relinquished all the sportsman's pursuits, and would for hours walk in the fields studying. Frequently, such was the enthusiasm of his mind, when darkness stopped his studies, he would find himself far from home. The poor all knew him, and knew his circumstances. At that time I had very little to give him; but the little I could spare he gave to others more in want of it than himself. The blessings of the poor followed his steps, and his security was in the affections of all around him.

“It was in December 1780 that we heard of a family, about ten miles’ distant, which had been swept away, with the exception of the widow, by that fearful disease the smallpox. My children all had it when young, excepting Charles; and although many of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood sent money, as I know you did, Sir Hector, yet few would venture within the poisoned walls of the wretched and lonely widow. Charles, when he heard of it, instantly prepared for his long walk; and,

although his mother and myself warned him of the danger he ran, yet he was resolved to see the poor woman, and to return home to get whatever she most required. He promised us not to go into the house, and he kept his word. The old woman received the small pittance we were able to collect for her, and with outstretched hands to Heaven she prayed that he who thus relieved the miserable, might never want the protecting arm of God in any adversity! Vain prayer unheeded! Who dares to direct the will of the Omnipotent? His ways are inscrutable! Who can avert the evil when the hour is arrived? My boy's goodness led to his death. That evening he returned home in high spirits at having gained his point. Finding the poor woman in much distress, he had taken a circuitous route to regain his home; had called on several gentlemen, and by his warmth and eloquence,—for in England the ears of the affluent are seldom closed against the tale of misery,—he had obtained from one some wine, from another some medicine, from a third money. Tired and jaded as he was, he could

not restrain the generous feelings which animated him. He proposed—it was then eight o'clock,—to rest a little, and to return that night. Against this I interposed my authority ; for the snow fell fast, and drifted so as to conceal the path, and it was not a time for a solitary boy to venture on a walk of ten miles. But the next morning, although the severity of winter was at its height, he started at the first dawn of day, delivered the comforts he had gathered, promised a visit on the following day, and returned home. The third day the rain fell so fast that I kept him from his wishes. That very restraint, the offspring of parental affection, blighted all my hopes. By three in the afternoon the storm subsided : Charles was instantly on the alert. From that moment to this all is conjecture. He reached the poor woman's cottage,—that we have ascertained, and that he proceeded on his return home. We hardly expected him before ten o'clock, and all the little comforts we could command were in preparation for our son. Well I remember the shoes which were

placed before the fire, and the change of linen ; all that a mother's care could suggest to render her son happy—all that could show an anxious parent's love of her child was then displayed. The swift hand of time !—for time never lingers when anxiety commences —when an object is expected and yet comes not to the moment. Eleven o'clock, and no sound of the wicket-latch had preceded the footstep of my son. I told his mother to go to bed ; but that order was useless. We sat in silence, only interrupted by remarking how quickly the hour flew. Midnight came on : the murmuring breeze had swelled into a gusty, riotous noise ; the little rain, which before feebly reached our shutters, now came with quick force upon our dwelling ; and as the morning wind, the herald of misfortune, died for a moment in order to resume a greater strength, we heard the voices of men —we heard our wicket opened —we ran to open the door, which common prudence had left barred and bolted. Oh ! gracious Heaven ! I received my dead son, my murdered boy into my house ! The knife of the assassin had

nearly severed his head ! his eyes seemed started from their sockets ! whilst his firm hands were closed beyond our strength to open them. I stood like a statue ; I scarcely could credit the awful truth before me. I never spoke ; but with eyes fixed and riveted on my Charles, I heeded not those around me. They tell me my wife's scream might have been heard above the storm : she was as close to me as you are. I never heard it—I never caught one sound of it ; but, lifting my eyes on those who had brought him to me, I saw their lips move, I saw the eager description of the dreadful crime ; but from that hour to this I have never heard a human voice. I pray that at the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, I may stand before my Maker with the same hope of redemption as my son—for I have a belief that he will be numbered amongst the blessed."

The poor old man, overcome by the effort he had made, fell back upon a sofa, for they had reached the room long before the painful recital began ; — the little child leaned over

and kissed him, and then sat upon a cushion near him, holding his hand ; whilst Sir Hector felt for him as a man and consoled him as a Christian. After a pause of some moments, Sir Hector remarked that from one expression which escaped Mr. Hammerton, there was a slight allusion to the cause of this murder.

“ By signs, and by having the sad account written,” replied Mr. Hammerton, “ I only gleaned that three labourers passing the road observed a body lying by the side of the ditch. As the weather was bitterly cold and rainy, they imagined it must either have been a man intoxicated, who had fallen down and slept in spite of the elements, or that sickness had overtaken the traveller. On lifting it, their horror may be better imagined than described, when they saw that it was a murdered man. They took it instantly to a house not far distant, and my son was recognised by a poor old man he had often relieved. No trace, no tidings of those who did this savage deed have ever been discovered : years have passed away,

the crime has gone unrevenged, and perhaps the murderers prosper. But it was so ordained; and it is not for us to arraign the decrees of Providence, rather let us bow with all submission to his will."

"Surely, Mr. Hammerton, you do not believe that it was destiny,—that it was ordained above that this murder should be committed on earth?"

"You put the question strongly, Sir Hector, and I am embarrassed how to answer. The belief that it was predestined is my only solace. If I discredited that, I should consider myself the direct cause of my son's death."

"There are few men, Mr. Hammerton, who argue this great question with coolness and with reason. Men embrace the creed readily which yields the most comfort. It is evident that if we are not left to our own guidance here, we cannot be responsible hereafter. The belief in predestination shakes to the dust the free agency of man, and renders him nothing more than a mere puppet at a show, the strings being worked

by other hands. To what use shall we turn conscience? It ceases to be an inward monitor, to forewarn us of the commission of a crime, and must be considered only as a part of memory which most vividly retains the picture.—Is it not more consistent with reason to argue that certain men who existed by plunder, and who nightly prowled about for prey, met your son: they saw by his dress and manner that he was a gentleman; they imagined that money was always to be found upon such a person; they demanded it; he resisted: they, to be rid of a man who held the thread of their lives in his power, rushed upon him, and finding him powerful and likely to escape, murdered him? Is it not, I say, more consistent with reason to argue thus, than to consider that it was predestined before the formation of the world,—for you must go so far back as that,—that those men should be at a certain public-house at such a time, and leave it to a minute; that the old widow should be ill, and that your son should leave home exactly at three o'clock to relieve her? And all—what

for?—why, that a murder should be committed.”

“I own, Sir Hector, it does look like desperation of thought; but the belief that it was so ordained gives me great — nay, my only comfort; for I cease to weep when I think that I could not avert it—I cease to mourn when I ought to rejoice: it is this thought which comes as a consolation in my affliction, and strengthens me now to bear up against my accumulated misfortune in the loss of my wife. How could you, Sir Hector, bear to have a child fair and lovely like that little angel—to see others catch the quick remarks she made, to see the joyful smile play over the countenances of strangers as her childish wit suggested the ready reply, and yet never to hear her—never to have heard one word she uttered? If you, like me, should stand in the church deaf—stone deaf—and murmur your prayers in silence; if you could feel what it is to see the preacher exhorting his Christian brethren to repentance; or whilst you saw others with eager ears catching every sound,

and bearing witness of the truth by the flushed cheek, the quivering lip, and not unfrequently the tearful eye ;—then would you feel as I feel, a great—an only consolation in believing that my present affliction was an evil ordained which I could neither fly from nor avert.”

“ I believe,” continued Sir Hector, “ that great misfortunes are likely to lead to the extraordinary belief we have just argued. Yours are great, and you bear them like a man : as far as human power can alleviate them, I will alleviate yours. We must consider this question again, under other circumstances. I own, at this time, when new-fangled opinions on the awful subject are bandied at every table,—and when, I grieve to say, many learned men employ their time and their talents to undermine the belief of their neighbours, and to take from them their greatest consolation by shaking their faith,—that I feel much inclined to be, as far as my poor abilities will permit, a more than silent upholder of our church. Our neighbours the French have given us sad examples what brutes men become when they have shaken

off the restraint of religion ; and I, as a father, would strive to inculcate that doctrine from which I have received so much comfort. My son, Mr. Hammerton, is not exactly a Charles or a Frederic Hammerton."

"I would to heaven, Sir Hector, he were like one or the other. In my children I have been blessed : Charles was all a father could wish, Frederic is the stay and prop of my house, and that dear little affectionate Amelia my consolation—my hope ! Although Providence has afflicted me in some respects, the balance is still in my favour. But who would have riches for a disobedient boy to inherit ? or what affluence could compensate for the dreadful calamity of seeing one's own blood turning against one ? Thus, Sir Hector, do I borrow consolation from the ills of others, and verify an old saying, that 'there is something in the misfortunes of our best friends which alleviates our own.' Your boy, like mine, will do well. Perhaps from over-indulgence—for an only child, Sir Hector is always a little spoilt—he may be a little refractory ; but the benefit of example and dis-

cipline will soon restore him to rectitude of conduct : he must be brave to be a Murray—and to be a Murray he must be good.”

“ I hope,” said Sir Hector with a smile, “ you were predestined to be a prophet : but that boy has given me much uneasiness, and the fact of your having received two letters while I have not received one since they sailed, does not contribute to make me feel more satisfied with his conduct. Come, Mr. Hammer-ton, dinner waits.”

CHAPTER IX.

The Boat at Sea.—A Ship in sight.—Mutiny and disappointment.

It has been said that friendships contracted early, or those formed late in life, are generally of a more lasting nature than friendship formed in the intermediate time. Sir Hector, now without his boy, experienced much pleasure in the society and conversation of Mr. Hammerton. Every morning some little comforts of life were sent to the cottage; and the quiet, gentlemanly manner in which these comforts were conveyed, rendered Mr. Hammerton less averse to accepting them, and softened his pride, if one so humbled could be proud.

The 2nd of November, the day on which the Tribune experienced that heavy gale, and

on which Hammerton was so miserably separated from his ship, was a day of great rejoicing at the cottage. Amelia received a handsome present from Sir Hector in the shape of a workbox; and it was whilst with childish eagerness she removed the reels for cottons that she discovered a small piece of paper, on which was written a check for one hundred pounds. Mr. Hammerton was at once aware of the delicate manner in which Sir Hector had conveyed this timely present, and the tears started from his eyes as he pressed his benefactor's hand. But Sir Hector had not stopped here: he had written a letter, dating it on Amelia's birthday, to Frederic, directed to Halifax, in which he had inclosed fifty pounds, with a desire that if Mr. Frederic Hammerton should at any time require pecuniary assistance, he would draw for the amount upon Sir Hector Murray. In this letter he desired his affectionate remembrance to his son, mentioning that he had heard of him twice from Mr. Hammerton, but that he had not received a line from himself.

Sir Hector now resolved to remain in Somersetshire for five or six months ; and scarcely a day passed without Mr. Hammerton being an inmate for some hours at the hall. Thus time glided on agreeably to both the old gentlemen until the middle of December.

We must now return to Frederic Hammerton and his few companions in their frail boat. When he had sufficiently recovered from the stupor occasioned by his great exertions in maintaining himself above water, Hammerton became much alarmed for the situation of those who had thus generously risked their lives to save his own. He was the only officer in the boat ; for Weazel, who was ever ready for any dangerous enterprise, as well as for any practical joke, had been called out of the boat before she was lowered ;—in fact, he rather delayed than expedited the movement, for his strength was unequal to the casting off the stopper ; but his generous disposition had been shown, and was not overlooked by either his officers or messmates.

No sooner had Hammerton surveyed the

danger by which he was surrounded, than he took the command with as much coolness as if he had been sailing up Portsmouth harbour. He was sensible that he was rescued from one peril only to face a greater.

The different ships of the convoy, finding they had made but bad work of shortening sail, bore up before the squall, and were soon far, far distant from the boat. The frigate wore at the appointed time, and crossed the boat out of sight; and when, towards evening, as the sun was going down, the haze cleared off and the wind abated, not a speck was to be seen in any direction. The cutter of the Tribune with six men and Hammerton, all hungry, faint, exhausted, with two breakers of water, but no provisions of any kind, was alone on the wide waters.

The setting sun, which blazed in all its glory before it sank below the western horizon, was the first object which recalled to Hammerton's mind that the boat was standing to the southward—or rather, that her head was in that direction; for Hammerton had considered it the

best plan to keep only one oar at work to leeward, in order to keep the cutter's bow to the sea, and with this view had made the other men take spell and spell about ; his object, like that of the captain, being to remain as near his first situation as possible. To look for the frigate was hopeless ; and as the wind had so far moderated as to allow him to carry sail, he put her head towards the north-east, stepped the mast, and set the close-reefed sail.

Here at once is an instance of the prudence of first lieutenants in well-disciplined ships : the oars, mast, and sails of the boat had been lashed amidships in her. Fortunately that which is often done—the removing the masts and sails out of the quarter-boats in order to lighten the weight upon the davits,—was no plan on board the Tribune. Captain Barker always kept every boat ready for service, and the two breakers of water now in her proved how necessary such precautions were : many lives have been sacrificed in the navy from covering the boats on the quarter, and many are imprudent enough to remove the masts and sails.

This was a trying situation to one so young as Hammerton; and it was when the sun's upper rim was but for a moment visible before it sank below the horizon, that Hammerton's busy memory recalled to him that this unfortunate day was the birthday of his only sister Amelia. Little did Sir Hector think and Mr. Hammerton know when they drank Frederic's health after dinner, and when his father added, "May God bless and prosper him!" how necessary were their prayers. Little did they think he was then sitting half-drowned in a lonely boat with six other gallant fellows, their only hope of salvation being their safe arrival at one of the Western Islands.

In the cutter there was an awful silence: the near approach of darkness, although the weather moderated gradually, brought with it much apprehension to the minds of all; but as yet discipline maintained its place, and none spoke aloud of either dangers or difficulties. Hammerton, whose thoughts took a homeward range, looked into futurity with a dreadful fear. In the event of his death he beheld his sister an

unprotected orphan; his father he knew could not last long; his mother he believed alive, but upon the verge of the grave—for in comforting her husband she had ruined her own health: and thus did an hour fly in thoughts of home—of former happiness, and of trembling apprehension for the future. He was awakened from this dream of reality by one of the seamen asking “what he intended to do?”

“To reach the Western Islands,” replied Hammerton. “We have only about two hundred and fifty miles to go, and I think they ought to bear about north-north-east of us. We look up nearly our course, for there is the north star; the weather is moderating, and with another reef out of the sail and keeping her full we may force the boat along five or six miles an hour. But we have another hope almost greater than our success in reaching either Corvo or Flores,—which is the possibility of meeting some of our convoy: they will push for the Western Islands to repair damages, and some which were dismasted may yet supply us with a home. One thing, my

lads, we must all join in—that is, a resolution not to waste the water in the breakers. We are all in the same perilous condition—any chance may save us; but we must not oppose ourselves to the possibility of chance rendering that assistance: each man must now be a sentinel over us all. With the water and our shoes, or what chance may throw in our way—sea-weed—a turtle perhaps,—we may manage to hold up well and strongly for three or four days: in that time, if no gale of wind comes to mar our hopes, we may be safe and snug on shore. At any rate, it is no use looking on the worse side of the picture. We are, it is true, in a sad situation, and nothing but forbearance, prudence, and courage can extricate us;—I thank Heaven, although I am the innocent cause of this calamity, that it was in endeavouring to save others I became that cause; you in endeavouring to save me have now need of the assistance of others: but as long as I live, my brave fellows, I trust you will neither want an example nor a guide. From me you must learn to bear without a murmur the privation of

food, and from me you must learn to hold up against difficulties and dangers. I speak to men—men who have already volunteered to sacrifice their lives for the crew of a strange vessel, not one of whom was known to any of you; and I now call upon you to keep steady and resolute of purpose, in order that each may assist the other—that each may contribute to keep up the spirits of the rest.”

“I wish,” said an old fellow who was sitting on the after-thwart, “that we had the purser’s steward and some grog here to keep our spirits in the natural way.”

“We’ll do all that’s right, Mr. Hammerton,” said a second; “but I should like a drop of water just now.”

“Well, my lad,” replied Hammerton, “you can have it. I think it would be better now to begin as we are to go on,—to serve out the small quantity we must allow each other, to arrange the watches, and to make the best of this bad business. So now, Jones, hand up that breaker, and let us start the bung.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” said the gallant fellow as

he reached his hand towards the object ; and then he looked up with a face that showed the sincerity of his words while he said, " It 's half, if not quite empty."

A thrill of horror ran through Hammerton : here at once half his hope was destroyed. The crew seemed instinctively to catch the rising fear, and a movement was made towards the other, when Hammerton said with great coolness, " Never mind ; the other is full, and we shall be safe long before that is finished." But no imagination can picture his feeling of horror lest the same words of distress should arise when the other breaker was lifted.

" It 's full," said the sailor who lifted it.

" Thank God ! thank God !" said Hammerton as he raised his hands to heaven. " How grateful, my lads, ought we to be that the man whose duty it was to have secured this breaker has done it more effectually than the idle fellow from whose carelessness we might have lost our lives. Is there nothing in the first breaker ?"

" Why, it rattles a bit, sir," replied M'Donald,

a hardy, fearless Scotchman, who had learned in his younger days to think a handful of oatmeal a luxurious feast; "and I think it must have a' quart or two in it."

"Then let us begin with that first: hand it here."

A small pannikin, which had been used to bale the boat, was likewise handed aft; and Hammerton, with steady exactness, measured the allowance to each. When this was done, he poured out for himself, taking about half what he had given to the others.

"No, no, sir," said M'Donald; "fair play's a jewel. Molly, let go my hair and I'll fight till I die! We won't have a drop more than you, and you must take your allowance. You served it out to us, and now I will stand mate of the tub and give you your portion."

Hammerton, who had controlled his desire, could not resist this generous display of feeling in his comrades; and the last drop in the breaker hardly gave him his full and fair allowance. "And now, my lads," said he, "I think from the feeling you have just manifest-

ed, that we shall all face this danger like men. We must not, however, leave ourselves blindly to chance. We are in the hands of Him who made us; but we must exert all our powers to retain the life He has been pleased to bestow. This, in our case, will be best effected by regularity. We will divide ourselves into three watches. M'Donald and Jones, you are in the first watch; Wilson and Barrow, you are in the second; and Henderson and Williamson, you are in the third. I am in all your watches, to be on the alert continually. And now we must pipe the hammocks down: but, before we go to sleep, let me implore you, my lads, to kneel down with me, offer up thanks for our delivery until now, and earnestly pray that God's mercy may still be extended towards us."

The six men then, with the exception of the steersman, joined Hammerton, who knelt in the stern-sheets, in a short but heartfelt prayer for deliverance.

As Hammerton ceased, a simultaneous Amen responded from all; and "they rose," as

M'Donald said, "better men, with better courage."

The cutter was a lugger-rigged boat, with a fore' and mizen sail. Both were now set without any reefs; and those who were appointed to keep the first watch came aft into the stern-sheets; the other four went forward, or in midships of the boat; and Hammerton lay down with his head on the breaker of water. Young as he was, he knew that when hunger or thirst assailed, reflection never interposed her authority to check the desire. He had read of shipwrecks, and of the crews on rafts, even during the first night, having seized the provisions, and in one moment rendered starvation a certainty: but in these acts of insubordination, the mischief had generally arisen from bad characters, who were only to be controlled by the fear of punishment; and as that restraint had been withdrawn, the wild disposition had broken adrift to the prejudice of all.

Amongst the six men there was but one who bore a suspicious character—and this

was Jones. Hammerton had placed him under the eye of M'Donald, one of the finest specimens of a British sailor—a man known for his rigid adherence to truth—a petty officer, a good seaman, a brave and a generous man ; and when Hammerton placed Jones in his watch, he conveyed by a glance of his eye what his tongue would have said had he been on board the Tribune. It may be supposed that Jones could not be a very bad man, as he risked his life for others ; but history affords many instances of the most doubtful characters not unfrequently proffering generous assistance.

It was not without a suspicion that Jones might attempt to purloin a draught of water that Hammerton made the breaker his pillow. The calm tranquillity of a good conscience assisted him to sleep ; and in a situation which would have kept most people awake, did five out of the seven find refreshing repose. Hammerton was frequently on the alert during the night, in order to see that the boat's head was kept as much towards the north star as possible ; and when the approaching daylight hid

that guide from their eyes, he steered the boat himself, making a due allowance from the rising of the sun.

At daylight each anxious eye was somewhat saddened from the conviction that not a vessel was in sight,—no fog-bank even gave a hope, a momentary hope, that land was in view;—and many of them would willingly have been deceived;—but on this occasion, the eager eye, which scanned with expressive care every second of the degrees by which they were encircled, turned sickened by the useless effort, and the tongue bore witness to the fact as it repeated, “Nothing in sight! nothing in sight!” The wind, however, continued fair, and the little cutter slipped along. This was some consolation; although now the appeal of human nature in the shape of hunger came rather strongly, as if determined to draw its proper attention.

For two days their condition remained much the same, saving that the wind shifted to the north; and Hammerton saw the first approach of insubordination on the evening of the third

day in Jones's careless levity, and in his many expressions, approaching even to taunting Hamerton with having been the occasion of their misery. M'Donald sat quietly on the after-thwart, making as much out of a shoe as would suffice for breakfast ; and the even-tempered Scotchman, as he returned it to his foot, after he had taken his allowance of water, said, "Aweel — aweel, I'm just thinking it's no very great hardship, after all, to have soles for breakfast : and an idle mon might rather like the business of being obliged to do nothing, just as well as holystoning the lower deck during his watch below."

Jones, however, soon began to show a worse spirit : he could neither control his hunger nor his tongue, and he vented his abuse against all the creation at a breath, finishing by making an attempt to tear the leather-hat from Wilson's head. Wilson defended that which was not only a defence for his head, but his all for his stomach, and a serious affray took place. Hamerton immediately rushed at Jones, who now boldly disobeyed his orders, refused to acknow-

ledge his control, and in the fury of his passion struck him more than once; the others took their officer's part, and the business finished by Jones being rendered incapable of more mischief, from the exhaustion his exertions had occasioned.

This was, however, a sad harbinger of that which was to follow. The line of discipline had been cut through, the officer had sunk to the level of his men, an open defiance had been manifested, and it was evident that each person was too much occupied with himself to pay any attention to Hammerton's directions. The many long hours of daylight,—long, for no occupation but that of thought could interfere to divert hunger,—wore slowly away. Jones refused to take his turn to steer: he lay forward with his face in his hands, cursing and swearing, and calling loudly to the others to seize the breaker and have a good hearty draught at once. It was evident that he had not a very inattentive audience—Barrow and Williamson seemed much inclined to join him; and although the evil was postponed, yet the thought

had been engendered. Towards noon the wind died away, and the idle and useless sail flapped against the mast as the boat rolled from side to side.

Hammerton, who knew that every minute was precious, suggested the necessity of using the oars; and one or two, such as M'Donald and Wilson, immediately took their places. But when they found that Jones, Barrow, and Williamson refused to lend a hand, they remained inactive; and quite unavailing was the example set by Hammerton, who seized an oar, and worked away until fatigue and annoyance overcame him. He addressed his men again; but it was useless,—they were clamorous for water, and they resolved to have it. In this they were opposed by M'Donald, Wilson, and Hammerton, who in vain kept saying, "Fools that you are! you only hasten what you wish to prolong. Should you gratify your desire now, how are you to wet your parched lips five hours hence? Is it not better to bear a little suffering, than wilfully to increase it? The

more you drink, the more you will require ; whilst, on the contrary, the less you accustom yourselves to, the less will be requisite to sustain life. And now,—while the calm prevents the approach of any vessel—now is the time to endeavour by the oars to alter our position, that, should any vessel be near, we may approach her.”

“ All very fine,” said Jones : “ but I ’d rather die outright than feel what I do.”

“ If you ’d just keep yoursel quiet,” said M’Donald, “ you ’d nae have the fever upon you as you have now.”

“ Keep the devil quiet !” returned Jones. “ I tell you I ’m thirsty, and I would rather jump overboard five hours hence than live until to-morrow evening and be saved as I feel now.”

“ Oh,” said Barrow, “ no gammon, M’Donald : it ’s now every man for himself, and God for us all ; and I say, let ’s have a good drink, and never mind to-morrow.”

At this instant Hammerton saw, or fancied he saw a vessel : it turned all thoughts imme-

diately to the mutual safety, and with one accord they agreed to take to the oars if an extra allowance was served out ; but without this, three of the crew positively refused to work. This was a moment of intense anxiety. The quick sight of M'Donald had confirmed Hammerton's report ; whilst Jones, desperate from fever almost to madness, and blinded from eagerness, immediately caught hold of the halyards of the yard and in a moment was at the mast-head. The boat had rolled heavily before from the swell ; and as miseries and misfortunes always assail those in distress, so were they now true to their usual current : the boat surged over on the larboard side ; the halyards had been belayed on that side and made the only security to the mast,—it snapped just above the thwart, and mast, sail, and Jones fell overboard. It would have been well for the rest had this man met his fate : but although he was the cause of all the confusion which had prevailed, for he alone had commenced insubordination, and the chance of es-

cape also might be sacrificed if he was saved, yet such is the inherent generosity of British seamen, that each stretched out his hand to his assistance ; and as M'Donald said, " Here, Jones, just seize this, my mon," he continued dryly enough, " I'm just thinking that we might spare his company, for all the good he 'll do us."

The wreck being saved, the sail was rolled up, and even Jones, having seen the vessel, thought it was as well to take an oar ; but not one of the three would pull a stroke until some water had been given them, and Hammerton, knowing that every minute became more and more precious, persuaded M'Donald to yield to the desire of the three men and give them an extra allowance. The small quantity only gave an additional desire without quenching the thirst, and Hammerton discovered his error when it was too late ; for the three discontented men, after pulling about twenty strokes, laid their oars athwart, resting their arms upon them, and in sullen determi-

nation expressed their resolution not to pull another stroke until they had more water. The haze which the calm occasioned was going off as the sun declined, and the stranger was plainly visible: it appeared as if they had already neared her considerably, and Hamerton was not without hope that, could he near her a little more, she might distinguish the mizen of the boat, which still remained hoisted. It was this apparent closing with the stranger that made the refractory more clamorous, and the reasoning of the disaffected reached all but M'Donald.

“ We shall be saved in an hour,” they said, “ and therefore, why suffer what we do suffer, when at the end of that time we shall not need it? Give us the water now and we will work like men; but we are not horses, to work first and be fed afterwards.”

Time now was not like the tortoise—every moment was of value: the slightest breeze might fill the sail of yonder ship—the setting sun and coming darkness might shut her from the sight of those already fatigued with watch-

ing her ; and who was to inspire the wearied and the hungry with courage when the object which was to relieve both should be invisible ? Whilst the finger could point, the eye bear witness, and the tongue assert, “ ‘There she is,’ ” there was hope.

“ My men,” said Hammerton, “ why throw a chance away ? It is true there is the vessel, and we have neared her ; but we are not yet on board. A breeze may spring up : our mast is gone—rendered useless. How then are we to keep sight of her but by the oars ? Consider the valuable time we are losing : for if before sunset she does not see us, the evening’s breeze may take her from us ; and then what are we to do without water, without provisions, without mast or sail, our strength exhausted—our hope gone ? Take example by me and M’Donald, my lads ; work as we work : every struggle brings us nearer our salvation—every moment lost renders our chance more desperate.”

It was quite useless : the three men refused to pull a stroke, and the fourth and fifth men

now followed their example, leaving M'Donald and Hammerton, the only two who still plied the oar and kept the boat nearing the stranger. At last M'Donald said—

“ I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, there is but one thing to do, and that nae so pleasant to you and me, who are not such down-hearted curs as those vagabonds without courage forward. I'll just propose to you one thing which will make them work,—and that's the only thing that will, since we've no boatswain's mate among us. Give them the breaker and let them drink their fill, then start the rest overboard. It's a desperate measure, sir; but we have to deal with desperate men, and every minute now is worth an hour hence.”

“ Good God !” said Hammerton, still pulling away; “ what do you propose, M'Donald? Suppose we do not reach her, what is to become of us ?”

“ Die like men, Mr. Hammerton,” replied the cool Scotchman; “ and if we don't do it, we shall die like a pack of cowards, as those fellows are there. I'm thinking I've half a

mind to see if one of the stretchers might not get a little life into them."

"I'd just advise you, you Scotch rascal," said Jones, "to put a little life into us that way, and we'll put a little death into you."

"That's the mon, Mr. Hammerton," replied M'Donald, "whose life we saved half an hour ago! You see, there's nae use in piping to people who canna dance."

"It is one and all," said Hammerton, laying in his oar: "and now then for the water."

At this intimation all hands made a rush aft; two of the oars went overboard and drifted astern, none making an effort to save them; and Hammerton and M'Donald not seeing them, the others took care not to say a word about that which might keep them lingering even a moment. With greedy lips each applied his mouth to the pannikin, which was filled and refilled until everyone was satisfied. Hammerton as he took his last draught shook the breaker, which did not contain more than half a gallon, and proposed to save it.

“Nay, nay,” said M'Donald, “that is of nae use even for twa of us. Look here, you Jones,—there's the ship: do you see her?” Jones nodded. “And here,” said he as he started the rest overboard,—“here is no more water—not a drop, and now the oars and your own labour is your only chance.”

This desperate act recalled every man to his senses: they took their seats, and bitter were their curses as the boat's head was turned from the ship in order to recover the oars. Some time was lost in agreeing to do so; but Hammerton was resolute, and as even hunger was satiated for the moment by the large quantity of water swallowed, the last spark of subordination gave its twinkling light before it was extinguished for ever. The crew now became sensible that their only chance was hard work and no flinching. The stranger must have been about eight or nine miles distant, and Hammerton, as he cheered them on, said, —“Two hours at the farthest, and we shall be safe. Give way, my lads; don't keep looking behind you! And then think how

much dearer life will be when by our exertions we shall have saved it. Stretch out, my lads !”

The men pulled, and pulled their strongest ; M'Donald was the only one who responded “ Pull away, boys !” the rest used their utmost strength and in silence did their work. In about half an hour they had neared the vessel considerably, and in an hour, had the vessel been as eager to discover vessels as merchant ships generally were during the war time, the boat's mizen might have been seen ; but the captain was more intent upon trimming his sails to a light breeze springing up from the westward. With dismay Hammerton saw the studdings set to catch the wind, and imagination pictured the ship increasing her distance. Now came the fact, that the time lost in disputing about the water had been the most precious in their lives ; now was the truth confirmed, that had they stuck to their oars when they first used them, they would have been nearly, if not quite, alongside of that ship which, beginning to feel the influence of the breeze,

was no longer lying becalmed upon the waters, but, with her head in the same direction as the boat, was evidently, from the steady course she maintained, under the influence of the helm.

Every man saw this, and every man felt that now or never was the moment. The moment had passed: in vain did the man steering the boat stand up and wave his handkerchief; in vain he bawled his loudest — his voice never reached one hundredth part of the distance; in vain the more and more wearied men used their efforts to near her. The palpable truth admitted of no doubt: the vessel was increasing her distance, the boat was unseen, the sun was about to set, and further exertion was unavailing. One by one the oars were laid in; the breeze had not as yet reached the boat; and although a cat's-paw or two appeared broad on the bow, and perhaps aloft, there was a breeze, yet they who heeded it most never felt it.

“It's nae use, I 'm a-thinking, Mr. Hamerton, to pull onesel to death after this man-

ner," said M'Donald: "we had better see if we can get the foresail up, and they might see that."

This last chance, desperate as it was, was tried: the broken part of the mast was placed on the step, and two of the crew kept it upright, whilst others lashed it to the thwart and hoisted the wet sail. Then might have been seen the last effort of human beings, whose reason was half estranged by despair, endeavouring by every act to catch attention. One placed his jacket on an oar, and held it above the sail; another had fastened his handkerchief to the boat-hook, and was waving it to and fro; a third, who could not relinquish hope entirely, still pulled an oar, whilst he who had steered relinquished the tiller; and standing up, supporting himself by the mizen-mast, still hailed the more distant ship, as the tears of disappointment ran down his cheeks. Jones had applied the breaker to his mouth, and had perhaps succeeded in squeezing one drop from the bung-hole, when Williamson snatched it from him and in vain attempted to be equal-

ly successful: enraged at the disappointment, he threw the breaker overboard, and fell exhausted on the stern-sheets.

In the mean time the light breeze had reached the boat,—a mere prolongation of agony; the end of the halyards was passed round the mast, and secured it pretty firmly to its thwart; M'Donald and Hammerton tied up a hasty reef; and the boat thus placed under canvass, made some progress to the southward, in which direction the ship was still plainly visible, and even then hope would not be entirely defeated. Few were the words spoken: Hammer-ton steered, keeping his eyes fixed upon the ship; but shortly the sun, in one unclouded blaze of light, touched the horizon, sunk, and was invisible.

It were useless to picture the last efforts of the nearly-exhausted crew. Again the oars were tried; again was the cheering voice heard; again the falsehood which hope had pictured as a truth, that they neared the ship fast, was declared; again even the little jest was heard; again the "Give way, boys!" re-

sounded, until the fast-coming clouds of night gathered over the clear sky above them; and as the obscurity increased, the darkness of despair became more intense; but when the vessel was ultimately lost sight of, more than one groan reached the ears of all. All was over—every effort was now unavailing: no star would direct them in their pursuit, no compass point the right bearings; the resolute and robust sank fatigued and overcome; the oars were once more boated; and had not Hammerton still remained faithful to the tiller, not another man would have given himself the trouble even to steer the boat.

It was at this dreadful crisis that the thirst, satiated for the moment, had now been recalled by the exertions which had been made; but all knew that no remedy remained. After venting their curses upon Jones, who had been the cause of their sufferings, some extending them to Hammerton, who, had he acted at first as he acted ultimately, would have saved them, the voices, even in cursings and blasphemings, grew more and more indistinct.

until nature was entirely overcome, and all but two sank into a kind of stupor, remaining for some time insensible to the peril which surrounded them. Two, however, mastered even exhaustion ; and in the stern-sheets of the boat Hammerton and M'Donald knelt down, and again implored the divine support during the miseries which impended.

CHAPTER X.

*Despair, murder, and punishment.—Hope to the last.—A
Sail appears.—Rescue.*

NOT long did the pleasure of forgetfulness remain—not long could those lulled in the stupor which over-exhaustion had occasioned continue in comparative blessedness. The last hour of life will not come for the miserable and the afflicted, however eagerly it may be desired; and although the strongest are sometimes laid low by the most trivial event, yet the spark is not always quenched without the fierce struggle which hope to the last moment never fails to inspire. It is well that it is so; else the faint of heart would, when the bright colours became a little dim, sink into dejection. But strange—passing strange it is, that those who are nearest

to death cling with the greatest tenacity to hope ! In atrophy, does not the poor emaciated, exhausted skeleton propose schemes the fulfilment of which would require the longest life ; and when the winter is at hand, and death at the door, plan parties of amusement for the coming spring, when Nature shall revive, and Fashion give new laws ?

The light breeze which had sprung up during the latter part of the day freshened sufficiently to blow the mast over the side, the lashing having been insufficient to maintain it erect, more particularly as the broken part only rested on the step. Hammerton and M'Donald retained sufficient energy to save both, and the wet sail was hauled carefully into the boat, and the mast placed in security. It was now evident that starvation was near at hand, and that within the small space of a few hours one must die for the rest. M'Donald remarked,

“ I ’m just thinking, Mr. Hammerton, that we are in a doleful situation,—we ’re without water, and without a morsel to eat ; and it ’s nae use being frightened to death, and still

less use putting one of us above the rest. Misfortunes humble us alike, and now we are all equal. It's nae use calling a mon an officer when he has nae authority: and the captain himsel would not get much attended to by yon Jones there, who's already as mad as a real Bedlamite, and has been drinking the salt water for the last quarter of an hour. You and I, Mr. Hammerton, have more strength left in us than all the rest put together; and I'm thinking that if any stranger hove in sight now, we should have to save the others. There's poor Henderson, a child who has seen better days than these,—for none of us has ever seen worse,—he has been singing away as if he were under the forecastle bulwark in a gale of wind.

“And as for that child of the devil,” continued M'Donald, “that Wilson, he has been amusing himsel wi' getting the pannikin and pouring it over Henderson's face to wet his whistle. I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, that they are all mad together: for there's Barrow swearing he's captain of the frigate, and ordering

Williamson to be flogged. I've laid my head down whilst you slept, and I have heard it all. Now, Mr. Hammerton, you and I, by the blessing of God, are not mad yet; and I'm just a thinking that nothing shows a man's mind more than his preservation of himsel and his body. We must stick together and protect one another; we must keep close."

"God of all mercies!" said Hammerton in a feeble voice, for the last business of the mast and sail had almost rendered him speechless from exhaustion, "save and protect us in this awful moment."

"Amen, amen!" repeated M'Donald. "I say amen, sir; but I'm thinking that it's the first law of nature to save yoursel. And of what use is a mon to himsel when he is not himsel? It's nae doubt very bad to commit a murder; but I'm thinking, Mr. Hammerton, that it's nae sin to kill one to save five."

"For Heaven's sake, M'Donald," said Hammerton, "do not think of it! Better to die as we are, than to die with blood upon our hands."

"It's very right what you say, nae doubt,"

said M'Donald ; " and as long as this piece of biscuit lasts, which I have kept pretty much to mysel, I 'm thinking, since we got into this scrape, and which, with the half of my shoes, has kept me more alive than the rest, I may think so too ; but if we get mad, there will be murder enough, and perhaps all will perish then."

" Oh," said Hammerton as he lifted his hands, " that I could die this instant ! And yet, my little sister, I would live for you !—who will protect you when I am gone — who will be a father to the fatherless ?"

" Now, Mr. Hammerton, you are talking just for all the world like a madman and like a wise man. It 's bad enough for the best of us all to die when we are summoned ; but for any man to wish to die who is not absolutely mad, is a cowardice which I 'm thinking was never born in that fine heart of yours. I 've a child too in Aberdeen awa, and I must try to live to feed her."

M'Donald, who with his usual foresight and prudence had still kept a small piece of biscuit,

because circumstances requiring it might occur either aloft or in a boat, was, as might be seen, the man best calculated to survive a desperate event like this. His coolness of temper, his general methodical manner of setting to work about anything, had all calculated him to sustain hunger or thirst better than his more irascible neighbours. Now, however, that he saw starvation inevitable, his mind became busy with horrid thoughts. At this instant Jones, infuriated to madness, cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, rushed with an open knife upon Henderson, who was singing a sailor's song, but not with a seaman's voice ; and as he reached the part

“ There's a sweet little cherub sits perched up aloft
To look out for the life of poor Jack,”

Jones caught the words, and rushing with maniacal fury upon his comrade, exclaimed, “ I'm the cherub, my lad !” and plunged the greedy blade into his heart.

M'Donald saw the deed, and his goodness of heart overcame every other feeling ; he staggered forward,—for Henderson lay on the second

thwart from forward,—and wresting the knife from Jones's hand, whilst he in vain attempted to clutch it more closely, threw it overboard and instantly seized upon Jones. The confusion and scuffle awoke the others, who, recovered a little from their sleepless drowsiness, joined in the uproar with their maniac companion. By the united force of M'Donald, Williamson, and Barrow, Jones was removed from the exhausted Henderson. The stream of life flowed fast away from the murdered man, and soon reduced him to so weak a state, that he died without an effort to save himself; and, with a calmness and composure only known in deaths like these, surrendered up his spirit without a groan or a sigh.

Jones, with the violence of a maniac, now seized upon M'Donald: but the wary Scotchman, in order to shake off the murderous nip of the madman, vibrated the boat from side to side, until, watching an opportunity when she surged over on the starboard side, he shook Jones from his hold. The murderer fell overboard and was drowned.

Far different was it now from that day when he fell with the mast!—no friendly hand was now stretched out to proffer assistance—no eager voice cheered him to exertion—no rope, no oar, no boat-hook was thrown or held towards him—not a man but Hammerton heeded the feeble cries of the poor wretch, and he sank within a foot of the boat unable to assist himself, and without exciting either the pity or the compassion of his shipmates.

“I would I were you!” said Hammerton to himself as he watched the extended circles caused by Jones’s fall. “Far better to be as you are now, than to linger a few hours more; to see reason blighted in others—to hear murder defended—perhaps to live upon the unnatural food forbidden by God, and only countenanced by the savage,—and to feel the gradual approaches of idiocy pushing reason from her throne. O God!” he added, “in the coming catastrophe may I glorify Thee to the last moment, blessed with the reason with which I am endowed, and surrender my soul to Thee as patiently as my poor comrade!”

It is certain that man is capable of receiving the greatest consolation from prayer—nay, that from the lull of disturbed nature which calms his mind he may even control for a time the very hunger which has dictated the appeal ; and it was whilst Hammerton received this kind of momentary peace,—for it is but an effort of the mind in the belief of the efficacy of the appeal as hunger must still do its ravage, thirst must dry up the mouth, swell the tongue, inflame the throat, and fever and fury do their worst,—that M'Donald staggered towards him and sank down at his feet.

“ I could nae help it, Mr. Hammerton,” he said : “ the Lord forgive me for the act ! I saw him murder Henderson ; and although I was half inclined to do some dreadful act, yet somehow when I saw the deed I could nae keep my hands from the ruffian’s throat. He’s dead, poor fellow, and I’m thinking, Mr. Hammerton, after all, that he’s better off than the rest of us. I’m very hungry, sir—very thirsty ; and before daylight, which seems as if it never would arrive, we may be starved ! ”

“Wait, wait, M'Donald,” replied Hammer-ton; “there may still be some consolation in store for us, and mayhap we may yet be rescued from this dreadful situation by some vessel. I can survive another day on this leather, and if we could but manage to bathe we might alleviate our thirst; but though the water is very near, yet we are too weak to try the experiment: if we got overboard, we never should have strength left to get in board again. Wait and until daylight, M'Donald.”

“I'm just thinking, Mr. Hammerton,” replied M'Donald, “that I'm getting mad very fast myself.”

There came over Hammerton a dizzy giddiness — nay, the perspiration started upon him in large drops; he lay down, and became sensible of his situation by the intervals of reason between his wandering thoughts. Whenever a trifling reaction brought him to himself, a vision of home, his aged parents, his darling sister Amelia, floated before him; and when he could command his reason, he always had recourse to prayer for them more than for himself.

At length the long-wished-for day dawned. M'Donald, a little relieved by an hour's slumber, was the first who caught a glimpse of returning light: he did not speak, but resting his chin upon his hands, which were placed upon the larboard gunwale of the boat, he watched the increasing light, which gradually appeared more palpable, until the sun itself, rising as it were from the bosom of the ocean, shone unclouded upon the miserable men, and showed their eyes the dreadful scene. The crew, now reduced to four, were disposed of in different parts of the boat; three were in a stupor, the fourth watching, and Hammerton praying; the daylight showed the latter the situation of himself and his companions. A light breeze still blew, the mizen was still set, and the boat's head would occasionally fly up towards the wind, and then fall off, drifting away to leeward.

The first thing which Hammerton perceived was some of the Florida weed close to him. He reached out his languid hand and caught it. Aware that it would only make his thirst

the more intense, and yet unable to resist this glutinous sustenance, he carefully squeezed as much of the water as possible from it, and was busily engaged doing so, when Barrow saw the prize. A ray of reason returning, he watched the languid hand of Hammerton feebly retaining the weed. He was on the after-thwart; and as all restraint had long since been removed, hunger levelling all superiority, he sprang towards his officer and seized it. Hammerton held on; and M'Donald turning round and seeing the scuffle, was not behind-hand in securing his share. As they tore the welcome food from their officer, they crammed it eagerly into their mouths: the more they ate, the more they required. In this dilemma Hammerton managed to save for himself a thick piece of the stalk, by allowing both to get a good hold of some of the small branches and then slipping them off. His assailants now turned upon and attacked each other, leaving him free to secure a small piece in his pocket whilst he hastily swallowed the rest. This welcome assistance, and the still greater benefit derived

that evening from the fall of a small shower, restored M'Donald and Hammerton a little : but Barrow before noon went raving mad, and he and his two comrades were in no condition to avail themselves of the blessing bestowed upon them.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, the forenoon having passed away without the smallest hope of relief from the appearance of any strange sail, that Hammerton perceived a growing wildness in M'Donald's manner. "He was thinking," he said, "that he should like to go mad, for then all his sufferings would be over." Hammerton endeavoured to use his own former reasoning against himself.

Another and another day passed : the breeze still continued. Whether the three men forward were dead or not, he was in ignorance. M'Donald had lain down to die. Hammerton had stretched himself along the seat of the stern-sheet ; and the boat floated and drifted as the wind blew or the current ran. No motion was visible in any of the crew, save in Hammerton, who occasionally varied his pos-

ture : all of thought—all of memory was extinct. A boat of more wretched spectres never floated on the high seas. No words were exchanged : indeed two only could speak. Ten days of hunger and thirst had worn out even the strongest ; and Hammerton, when he saw his staunchest adherent M'Donald lay himself down leisurely to die, felt the last chord of his own existence snap asunder.

How long they remained in this forlorn situation, not one of the number knew ; but when the breeze died into a light flow of wind, and before utter exhaustion had prostrated all, a vessel which had passed about five miles from them had been seen by two ; but the rest were not even to be roused by the words that a stranger was near them. A slight effort to attract attention was fruitlessly attempted, and when the sun went down the last hope disappeared with it.

It happened that the *Jonathan* of New York, in her return to her port, crossed the track of this devoted boat. The wind being light, and the merchant-ship hardly steering through the

water, she might have been seen to alter her course. A lug-sail had been observed by one of the seamen who had crawled aloft to repair the foot of the fore-top-gallant sail; the glass confirmed her as a boat apparently untenanted; the ship neared the unusual stranger, and objects became more visible—still not a soul was seen. The sea was smooth, the boat rode upon the water without rolling; and in that manner she was approached by the Jonathan, until the ship was steered alongside of her. The horrid stench was enough to frighten the American from his first intention of appropriating his prize to his own use. And when he ran alongside and, securing the boat, saw the five people motionless, the captain had determined to sink her, in order to avoid any fever which contagion might spread in his vessel. The mate's observation that one might be alive, induced the captain to risk a closer observation before he proceeded to put his intention in execution; and then it was, as the boat touched the side of the ship, that Hammerton lifted one hand, and murmured out loud enough for intense

attention to overhear, "My God! my God! we are saved!" It required nothing more than the indication of life to prompt the most generous efforts of the American. Hammer-ton was brought on deck by means of a rope fastened round him: the buttons on his waistcoat, for his jacket had been lost, confirmed the captain in the knowledge of his rank, and he was instantly taken to the cabin, stripped, and laid in a cot. M'Donald was alive, — a hammock was ready for him: the rest were dead, not one showing the smallest symptom of animation. The horror of the scene appalled the bravest mind. The men were afraid to touch them; the loathsome smell still clung to the boat; and to shorten as much as to alleviate the symptoms of growing discontent in those who were *ordered* to assist,—for when the men who retained symptoms of life had been removed, even the boldest of the crew shrunk from the scene which by turning over the bodies of the dead was made visible to them—the order was given to scuttle her.

The boat which had been true to them whilst

living, became their coffin when dead. The oars and sails were handed out ; and when scuttled, she was cast adrift from the ship. She sank gradually as the water rushed in and filled her. In her sank the remains of Barrow, Williamson, and Wilson : they died without knowing that death was near ; and the element which they had chosen for the theatre of their services rolled over them and swallowed them in its fathomless abyss. The crew of the *Jonathan* watched the last inch of the gunwale as it gradually sank below the surface, and the waters of oblivion and eternity covered the dead.

CHAPTER XI.

The Tribune ashore at Halifax.—Awful night.

ON board the Tribune of course the greatest anxiety prevailed as to the fate of Hammetton and his comrades. From the time the haze cleared off, a most vigilant look-out was kept for the boat; as the wind subsided, guns were again fired, men were placed aloft with glasses, and not an officer in the ship went below until darkness came on, and it was beyond question that no boat was in sight.

To leeward were two of the convoy; one dismasted, and the other in all the confusion of a merchant-ship whose sails had been split by the squall. They were a considerable distance off; and one of them showing a whiff as a signal to speak the commodore, it was sur-

mised that Hammerton with the boat might have reached the vessel. The Tribune, therefore, bore up, edging away to the south-east. This, as the boat had stood to the northward directly the north star was visible, made the distance so great between them, that the dawn of next day only confirmed the apprehension of the last evening. Still, however, there was hope. When the boat was last seen, she was near some of the ships; and although the vessel which had shown the whiff in order to get some assistance had not seen her, yet others might have picked her up: and thus those who really liked Hammerton, and who knew the value of men ever ready to risk their own lives for others, kept up their spirits under the delusion that they should meet again at Halifax. Captain Barker being unable to persuade the captains of the two merchant-ships to continue their course,—one having sprung a leak, and the other being a complete wreck,—he lent every assistance to the former; and having rigged jury-masts for the latter, they stood away to the northward, made the island of

St. Mary's, and then parted company from the frigate, which ship continued her course to her destination without one of her convoy.

On the 16th of November the harbour of Halifax was discovered; the wind being from the east-south-east, blowing fresh, and the ship nearing the land fast. Murray, whom Captain Barker had noticed from his exertions to be of service in the boat, and from his conduct since on every occasion, was ordered to get ready to go ashore in the gig. Released from the surveillance of Hammerton, he had joined Weazel in all his frolics; and the messmates of both, regarding them as youngsters likely to rise to high honour in their profession, as they had so gallantly come forward on the before-mentioned occurrence, overlooked most of their practical jokes or laughed at the frolics of the boys.

The harbour's mouth being visible, and the dangers of the navigation known, Captain Barker desired the signal for a pilot to be hoisted, and the ship to be hove to. The master, Mr. Clubb, a man of known worth, and yet not worth much, seeing that if the pilot came

on board, the money allowed for that service would pass into other hands, remarked to Captain Barker, when he gave the above order, that he had before beaten a forty-four gun frigate into the harbour; that every rock and shoal was as well known to him as the dead-eyes in the main-chains; that as the captain was anxious to anchor without delay, he would take charge of the ship, and as the wind was fair there could be no danger.

To such a statement what captain could advance an objection? The signal was countermanded. "Never mind the gun—forward," was heard; the sails were filled; and the commander of the frigate, in the full assurance of the perfect security of his ship, having ordered leadsmen into the chains, went below to his cabin in order to collect his papers, prepare his report, sign his log, and finish his letters. In the mean time the Tribune approached the Thrum-cap; and Mr. Clubb, having consulted a negro who had formerly belonged to Halifax, but whose character was sufficiently bad to have subjected him several

times to punishment, felt convinced the ship was standing in free from all danger. To his question to this effect, he might have remarked the malignant, sinister look of the black, as he replied, "Him steer good course, sar, — no ab fear, Massa Clubb—him shoal out there; and really for true, the man wid um lead no more use than rum to catch Jamaica-fly."

Mr. Clubb in reality knew nothing at all about the pilotage; and in those days the admiralty charts were not on the splendid scale of the present time. Not overflowing with the golden current, he thought that, under the directions of the negro, and with the assistance of Mr. Galvin, one of the master's mates, a man conversant with the difficulties and dangers, the harbour might be entered in safety without the pilot-money going to a stranger. In all cases like the present, a certain timidity may be observed in any man undertaking what he knows he cannot perform; and to such a nervous degree of excitement had Mr. Clubb arrived, that he took fisherman's turns, called out to know the soundings, looked over the side,

and exhibited feelings very contrary to the calm disdain of danger arising from accurate local knowledge.

About noon the ship had approached so close to the Thrum-cap, that Mr. Clubb could no longer command his fears: he sent down instantly for Mr. Galvin, who followed the messenger on deck at the moment that the man in the chains called out, with the long, careless notes by which the soundings are invariably accompanied, "By the mark five!" The negro, who considered himself the pilot, and who was quite pleased with the confidence reposed in him, remarked, "Berry good leadsman;—teddy boy at de helm:" but Mr. Galvin's look of horror when, on jumping upon one of the carronade slides, he beheld the situation of the ship, convinced Mr. Clubb of the danger she was in; and as he seized the wheel with the intention of wearing off shore, the ship struck with tremendous force and remained fixed upon the rocks.

Mr. Weazel, who was below, instantly called out to Murray, "By Heavens, Murray, the

ship's fallen overboard, and you'll have to walk on shore on the iron ballast!" Murray had no time to heed the fun. The confusion occasioned by this event baffles all description. The men had been sent below to clean themselves for going into harbour, the ship being considered by the first lieutenant as perfectly safe under the master's charge, with a leading wind and all marks plainly visible. The noise of the crew as they rushed upon deck, and the horror apparent in all, bewildered Murray, who found himself quietly seated on the deck. Weazel availed himself of the confusion to run against his enemy unawares, saying, "Out of the way, Johnny Newcome! don't you know the ship's on shore, and every man ought to be on deck?" Murray was not slow to follow his tormentor; and if the squall mentioned in the preceding chapters had blanched the cheek of some of the oldest seamen, this calamity produced a greater extremity of fear, for the men ran to and fro without any order or regularity; and it required the cool command of the captain more than once when he called,

“Every man to his station — shorten sail !” before order could be restored. The order repeated soon enforced obedience ; but few can tell how hard it is to maintain discipline when fear predominates.

As the sea rolled on heedless of the danger it created, the Tribune felt every shock the more severely : the mainmast as she struck amidships slackened the stay, and as she recovered herself, flew back to its original position with such force as to render it dangerous to be near : the masts and yards shook—nay, rattled, and it was useless to attempt to send men aloft to furl the sails, for they would inevitably have been shaken from their holds and have lost their lives. The signal of distress was hoisted—and that signal is not made on board a man-of-war until the danger is imminent. It was answered instantly by the ships in the harbour, whilst at the military stations they conveyed the intelligence in land. Then was to be seen all the generous ardour with which men court danger to save their countrymen : boats from the dockyard under

the boatswain of that establishment, and even some of the boats at the military stations, un-awed by the high sea and increasing wind, succeeded, after enormous labour and unremitting struggles, in reaching the ship ; but others, equally zealous in the cause, in vain toiled and toiled—the sea drove them back into the harbour ; and although many more volunteered and again and again tried to render service by being in readiness to land the crew, all labour was ineffectual, and they were as often forced back, until the increasing wind rendered the attempt abortive.

In the mean time Murray was learning a great lesson in his profession. It is in danger that British seamen are most conspicuous: the boldest soldiers have been seized with a panic and have fled—the English sailors have frequently at a sudden disaster lost all courage for the moment ; but both rally, and as they look with more calmness at the accumulating danger, so they brave it more steadfastly and oppose it more manfully. Murray soon exhibited symptoms of his daring character, and

he even distanced Weazel, who was, like himself, a novice in shipwrecks. Murray quitted the captain's side only to convey an order—he knew in that alone he could be useful,—the order delivered, he was back again; and young as he was, it was observed that when the ship struck the hardest, he betrayed no symptoms of fear, but kept his eyes steadily on his captain as if to anticipate his commands.

In the mean time the perilous situation of the ship became obvious: the gale was fast increasing; the night—a long night of November was closing in upon them; already had the haze of the evening dimmed the welcome shore, and the thick mist of the gale gradually spread around. The crew, assisted by those from the shore, were busy in lightening the ship: the guns were thrown overboard; every shot that could be reached was thrown clear of the ship; the sails were backed so as to assist in clearing the shoal should she float; the stores were given to the sea,—everything which could assist in the object, with the exception of cutting away the masts or the boats, was

thrown overboard, and exhausted nature almost sank under the continued exertions.

It was now dark—the night had closed in : the rolling sea with its white heads came rushing on higher and higher : above no moon shone to cheer them, or exhibited the lamp of night to point out a place of refuge should she float ; but the heavy clouds seemed to fly over the devoted ship, while as the sea increased she was lifted the higher to fall the more heavily. Ay, and well each seaman knew that the hard sides which had rolled over many a sea must shortly yield to the harder rock on which they struck, and that the worst danger now was her floating clear of the shoal. No bell marked the hour—no watch was called to relieve the tired—no hammocks were hung to welcome the sleepy ; nor could all the exertions of the crew avail against the storm : the ropes were flying about unbelayed,—the whole scene on board was indescribable confusion, and no pen—no, not of those who have witnessed such scenes the most frequently, can draw any adequate picture of the dismay, the apprehension—the almost abandon-

ment of hope on board the frigate. The long night had but begun, and who was to survive to see the sun rise? The gale came howling through the rigging, whilst the sea as it dashed against the ship surged by her with a deafening roar or broke right over her.

It was at half-past eight that Daniel Munroe, a fore-top-man, who was then in the star-board mainchains, called out that the ship was afloat: a sea which had threatened destruction swept her off the rock, tearing the rudder from the stern-post. The well was instantly sounded, and the cry of "Seven feet water in the hold!" told the dismayed and wearied crew that all escape was impossible. Still, however, they did not throw a chance away: the chain-pumps were instantly rigged, and little Murray might be seen endeavouring to turn the heavy winch. His voice as he cheered the men seemed to recall them to themselves; and that boy by his example kept them to their work. They could not despair when a boy so young seemed ignorant of the danger; and as the carpenter reported that the pumps

gained upon the leak their efforts were redoubled. Hope gleamed for a moment ; it was possible that the anchor might hold—that the carpenter's report might be true, and that the ship might be kept above water until the long-wished-for dawn should appear. The lights which blazed upon the hills only convinced the crew that those on shore knew their danger ; and as they stood high above the beach, they were no guides to lead them to the best place on which to run the ship. How many an eye was turned to those beacons — how many a heart panted to be there — and how often did the weary seamen look towards them !

The best bower was let go—that was an anxious moment ; the cable flew through the hawse-hole, setting fire to the bits, and running out to the clinch, snapped. Vain was every effort to stopper the cable or to choke the hawse-hole : the sea was running too high for any cable to have checked her, and hope, justly painted as an anchor, had parted. The jib and fore-topmast staysail were now set : the former sail was split, but the latter answered

the intention of keeping the ship off the wind ; and in this might be traced the wavering disposition which clung to the hope of yet saving the ship, and still running her nearer the shore, on which she must inevitably be wrecked.

The south-east gale still increased, and the shore bore north-west : no sail like a topsail could have been carried ; and even if the reefed courses and close-reefed topsails could have been carried, the ship was too far to leeward to weather the points which embayed her ; and now that heavy deadening sound which follows the roaring waves as they split upon the shore might be heard. The leak evidently gained upon the pumps—the approaching shipwreck was more manifest, when again the last effort of seamanship was tried. Soundings in thirteen fathoms had been called, when the small bower was let go, the fore-topmast staysail hauled down, the mizenmast and all the topmasts were cut away, and for a minute even the least sanguine hoped. It was but for a minute : the ship, which had rode to her anchor, gave a tremendous pitch—the cable snapped

like a rotten stick, and the Tribune fell broadside to the wind. The catastrophe was now at hand; the roar of the sea as it ebbed from the shore became more and more distinct; the surf —(for at that time, as if to mock the prayers of the weary crew, the moon shone to point out the horrid death which awaited them)—became visible, towering up the black steep rocks, obscuring them in its mist and then whitening the waters as they fell below. All order was gone. The crew crowded towards the gangway, from which the horrid view was most perceptible: some, knowing that death was close, resolved to gratify their appetites by breaking into the spirit-room, for that as yet remained untouched; some hastily reviewed their lives, and seemed to live again in scenes far, far away; whilst others knelt down and prayed. A few had been below and dressed themselves in their best clothes. But Captain Barker still remained on deck watching the near approach to the shore. Beside him, holding on by the capstan in order to steady himself, stood Murray. he appeared the only one unmoved by the

danger ; he had wound himself up to face anything ; and when Barker took his hand and pitied him and his father, the resolute lad replied, “ We have yet a good struggle for life : I can swim, and I shall do my best.”

It was about ten o'clock. The ship rolled over the waves, but there was an unsteadiness in the roll : each time as she recovered herself she seemed to stagger like a drunken man ; she did not rise quickly to the sea, and she fell with a more sullen lurch. The pumps were now deserted : the continued report that the water gained upon them had been made through Murray to the captain ; and knowing that seamen may be disheartened, he kept the secret to himself. But the warning came from those who went below to have one long draught before they died : the after-hold was afloat, the cockpit was impassable, and they returned on deck shouting, “ The ship is sinking ! the ship is sinking !” Then indeed rose the cry of a loud farewell ; then some ran up the rigging, others jumped in the quarter-boats to cut them away, whilst others held on an oar

or a spare spar. The order to cut away the lashings of the booms was quickly obeyed, for each saw a chance of safety from some floating spar; but whilst almost all were engaged in the work of self-preservation, Murray thought not of himself, but of others. In the ship were a few women and one or two children: they had come aft to the stump of the mizen-mast. The horror of the night, had the ship been whole, was sufficient to scare the weaker sex; but now that they comprehended the extent of the danger, kneeling down with clasped hands round their children, they vainly lifted up their prayers in all the incoherency of madness. But not for themselves did these women implore assistance: it was for their helpless children—for their daring husbands. This scene attracted Murray's attention; and, even at that moment, he endeavoured to comfort them. He persuaded them to run forward, as there they might cling to the rigging he actually caught one of the children from the mother, tore it from her arms, and with it reached the fore-castle. The mother followed, screaming for her lost child, and

mingling curses upon Murray with the cry for mercy from above.

Captain Barker knew, and so did his officers, that every chance was over, and that the ship would never float to reach the shore. He hurriedly took leave of all near him; whilst the women, believing that a captain can save, rushed towards him and knelt down, seizing him by the legs. It was at this distressing moment that the ship gave two heavy lurches, shook as if overpowered, and sank. A loud shriek arose that seemed the parting farewell of the brave crew; and two hundred and forty men, besides the gallant few who had reached the ship in boats, and the women, were in a moment plunged in the angry element.

Murray was at the instant when the ship foundered in conversation with Mr. Galvin, who was still urging the men below to try the pumps: both were washed clear from the ship, which as she sank soon touched the ground, for she had shoaled her water to about ten fathoms, leaving her upper works under the water, whilst her main rigging half-

way up was above the surface. Each struck out to regain the ship and reached the rigging, although Mr. Galvin had managed to evade the grasp of three of the drowning crew, who had endeavoured to clutch him in their dying efforts. Murray got into the maintop, supporting himself against the arm-chest, which had been secured to the mast.

About one hundred men still kept above water, holding on by the shrouds; the rest had perished—the sea had washed them far away, and their bodies rolled upon shore, breathless, dead. The foretop had been reached by ten men, who endeavoured to secure themselves there in the hope of surviving the night. No assistance was possible—no boat could have lived in that raging surf; the south-east gale was at its highest, and the iron-bound coast, as seamen call that part which presents nothing but abrupt hills or cliffs rising perpendicularly from the high-water mark, threatened that, should one more fortunate than the rest reach the shore, it could be only to be there dashed in pieces. Thus, deprived of all chance of succour,

did these hundred men, worn out with fatigue and cold, make preparations to pass the night. For an' hour the numbers scarcely diminished; but now, as the sea dashed over them, their grasp became more and more feeble. Then was the horror of the night at its highest; for sudden death, when the corpse is removed from sight, shocks not imagination like the gradual ebb of life, as wave after wave diminishes the strength, enfeebles the mind, and deadens the little remaining energy. Then was heard, as the wind appeared to lull under the approach of a roaring sea, the feeble cry for help; and when it passed rolling higher and higher, and boiling in its savage fury, one or two who called aloud for mercy were swept from the wreck.

CHAPTER XII.

*Perilous situation of Murray. — Bravery of a Boy. —
Cowardice of Landsmen.*

THE storm continued with unabated fury—midnight was advancing. At first one by one of the men were swept away: towards morning the number had been reduced to about fifty. Despair soon rendered others desperate—more than one slackened his hold and dropped into the sure death beneath. In vain those higher up the rigging called out to their comrades below them to hold on;—few know the resistless power of the sea as it sweeps towards a shore—the utter uselessness of prolonged opposition;—but above all other voices those of Galvin and Murray were heard, still exhorting the men to pass their bodies between the

ratlines, keeping their legs on the other side, and to hold on, "like grim death."

Towards two o'clock almost the whole had disappeared ;—some calling upon their more fortunate shipmates to bear home their last farewell and remembrances : others, with a levity ill-befitting the scene, died cursing everything, upbraiding those in the top for not changing places with them, promising to return to the post of danger when their strength was recruited ; and whilst they thus taunted them with the coward disposition which kept them aloof from the greater danger, the mainmast fell and every one had a struggle.

Before this happened, Murray, being aware that in the event of an accident his clothes would much impede him, had stripped off his jacket and trousers, and although thrown off the maintop, he endeavoured to regain it ; for, as if destined to be a haven of security to some, the top rested on the mainyard, that being held to the wreck by a portion of the rigging. Calvin reached it in safety ; but Murray was yet struggling for life. His feeble

efforts would never have availed against the sea which was now fast approaching, had not Galvin reached out his hand to his aid; and catching firm hold of his hair, placed Murray in comparative security.

Still many hours were left to face death in its worst approach. How long—how very long—will the strength of man last, though wearied, when life, wretched life is the object of preservation! and after, perhaps, having surmounted the dangers—having avoided that which has been called “of all dreadful things the most dreadful”—how frequently does he linger on in poverty and wretchedness, toiling and labouring only that he may live, although life be a burthen to himself!

In this scene of desolation, when the angry waves burst against the shores, shivered like mighty artillery into minutest drops, uniting again as they fell and sweeping in their recoil the poor strugglers, who imagined themselves in safety from their grasp, how loud was the call to Him who had been until then forgotten! —Then would the insatiate wave sweep by and

over them ; and as they recovered their breath with frequent gaspings, they would see one of their number gone—the gap left where a human being had lived not a moment before, and another wave rolling on appearing to them higher than the last, or perhaps ready to burst upon them.

So passed the night—a night of horrors never to be effaced from the memory of Murray ; and he—for justice bids us state it—was the boy (man he could not be called) who evinced the most generous courage of them all.

It was soon evident that the fore was a much more secure haven than the main top : the latter, resting on the mainyard, was more liable to be swept to atoms than the one which was only passed over by the surf, and which remained stationary as long as the foremast would stand ; whereas the maintop occasionally shifted, and from that insecure abode already two had been washed away. Murray, who was wise enough, if not sailor enough, to know that a few seas more—or only one if it burst upon them, would sweep them all to destruc-

tion, proposed to Galvin the dangerous expedient of reaching the foretop. Galvin was quite aware of the insecure position which they held; but he feared being swept away to leeward even from the hold of the rope by which he proposed to pass, and which was ascertained to be fast to some part of the rigging forward: he would not allow Murray to make the experiment alone, and he was fearful himself to be the first to try it.

“We never shall get there safe,” said the brave fellow; “and as I have saved you once, I’m not inclined to lose you now. It is to be done; but you are too weak, and I cannot spare one hand if I have to haul myself along the rope.”

“Then I’ll go first,” said Murray; “my life is of no more value than yours: I cannot make myself stronger, and by delay I shall become weaker. Give me the rope; I’ll wait until this sea has passed, and then I’ll start directly.”

“I would rather,” replied Galvin, “take my chance where I am. The top has held on, and

may still ; and I 'm not sure but by changing we may be worse."

"That may be," said Murray ; "but I think otherwise : you will do as you like."

The sea swept along as before—another and another had gone ; and almost before it had passed, Murray swung himself upon the rope and contrived to reach the foretop in safety. Here, however, was no place of security : in the top three men were dead. They had clambered up the fore-rigging, as their shipmates had been swept away, until, from the crowds which had clung to the ratlines, ten only remained. These three, exhausted and half-drowned, lay down and died at the moment they were apparently safe ; and Murray, when he reached the top and threw himself down, fell upon the lifeless bodies. Here, however, was a repose. The seas, as they towered along, swept, it is true, occasionally as high as the top ; but, generally speaking, they passed below it, the surf or spray alone flying into it. A short time restored Murray ;—he was not a lad to be killed easily—his mind would have supported him

where almost any other's would have failed ; —and he began instantly to see who were his new comrades. They were only four in all,—Dunlap, Munroe, Weazel, and another. The two first-named seamen considered themselves safe as long as the foremast stood — the last lay panting and almost dead ; and after some conversation as to the probability of assistance at daylight, a feeble voice was heard in lubber's hole, and Weazel was recognised. Assuming the command, Murray desired Munroe and Dunlap to assist him in throwing the dead bodies overboard ; and this was done without a murmur. He then got Weazel into the top and lashed him securely to the larboard side : he took the same precaution with the exhausted seamen, and sat down to wait for day.

Far along the eastern horizon already had streaks of light heralded the approach of the sun ; the thick masses of clouds, as they rose from the horizon to discharge themselves in heavy showers or to feed the wind, began to assume a lighter hue ; the shore became more distinct ; and the eye of hope could discern some

few on the cliffs watching the wreck, and waiting as if to tender assistance.

Murray told his shipmates to fasten a pocket-handkerchief, or any article of dress which could be distinguished, to the broken part of the toprail ; for he well knew that nothing would tend more to stimulate those on shore to render assistance than the proof that some were yet alive. It was useless to stand up and attempt to wave it, as Munroe did, for that was wasting strength ; and sanguine indeed must that man have been who expected assistance, when he cast his eyes towards the shore and witnessed the tremendous roll of the surf.

Daylight came : Galvin was in the maintop—every man was gone but himself and four others, and he seemed faint and exhausted. One by one they had dropped off—human nature could not support itself longer ; the hands, so firmly fixed upon the shrouds, at last opened, and the body fell ;—there, rolling over and over, it was dashed against the shore without a sign of life, a mangled and breathless corse.

With the sun came a trifling decrease of the gale ; the wind somewhat abated its force ; but the sea rolled on, the surf looked more horrible than darkness, and Murray found it advisable to quench a little of that hope which evidently was nurtured by the seamen. As for Weazel, he was insensible : he lay stretched out, and Murray's kind attention to him, by rubbing his heart and his feet, alone appeared to keep in the little portion of life which seemed to flutter before it expired.

Long did the time appear between daylight and eight o'clock, and yet it was only half an hour. The conspicuous signal was answered from the shore, and hundreds were seen waving their hats, as if to animate the sufferers to a longer exertion ; but no boat came—there was apparently no haven from which a boat could come, —all seemed an iron-bound coast, now whitened by the surf and spray.

“It is impossible,” said Murray to Dunlap, who kept his eyes fixed upon one part of the coast, “that any boat could live in such a sea as this. We had better keep quiet ; we shall

have need enough of all our patience and energy before we walk upon that cliff."

"I'd give a trifle just now," said Munroe, "for a piece of salt junk and a glass of grog; and I think I could hold out four-and-twenty hours longer."

"The gale is breaking to windward," said Dunlap; "and I think, if I were there, I would try if I could not get out of Herring Cove, which lies round that point. But it's not any of those men who are walking up and down like a marine before the cabin-door who'll get into a boat to save us: we had better do as Mr. Murray says, for we may have to swim for it."

"There goes another," said Munroe; and each eye was directed to the maintop. Another had been swept away: in vain the poor wretch held out his eager hands—no one could assist him, although for some short time he wrestled strongly against his fate. They saw him gradually grow more and more faint and faint, until at length a sea lifted him on its surge, and dashed him against the rocks. Those on shore saw and watched him approaching to

the verge of the beetling cliff; but assistance was vain, and curiosity was soon satisfied.

It was now near eleven o'clock, when Dunlap called out the glad tidings that a boat was endeavouring to round the point. "I see her! I see her!" was spoken by all.

"Here, Weazel, my boy," said Murray,—
"here's a boat coming off: cheer up! cheer up!"

"Leave me! leave me!" said the poor fellow;
"let me die or sleep!"

"Neither one nor the other," said Murray,
"if I can help it; we must all be awake now, for now comes the trial. She'll never reach us in this sea, I fear; and what a skiff it looks!"

"There's only one man in her," said Dunlap;
"and how he is to get her through this sea I don't know; but he must be a right good one to venture it alone. They say it's sweet to be hung in company; and drowning alone is cold work."

"Ay," said Murray as he looked towards the maintop, "cold enough. Thank God, however, Galvin yet holds on; and if one boat

reaches us, fifty may come. I don't think she nears us: do you, Munroe?"

"Yes, sir,—yes; he's farther out from the land than he was: but I'm blessed if I ever saw such escapes! There! he rides over it, and he's safe!—there! he bends his back! If ever that man lives to reach us, he shall have all my back pay; which, now as the purser's gone and his books are destroyed, will be a pound or two more than I reckoned upon."

"Hold on in the maintop!" roared Murray as he saw a sea higher than those which had rolled for the last quarter of an hour. It came, it passed—four only remained; but he that was gone was not watched—every eye was turned towards the boat.

It neared the ship; and then wonder, astonishment, exclamation, and gratitude were at the highest pitch. The boat was a mere skiff, pulled by a boy not more than thirteen years of age. With immense perseverance he toiled at his oars; as the sea approached him, he slackened his exertion, and the boat rose gradually to the swell. It passed; and the youngster

again, as if inspired with supernatural strength, strove to gain his object. Nearer and nearer the little frail skiff approached the wreck, when Murray stood forward and waved for it to pull to the maintop. The boy never heeded the signal, but was pulling towards the foretop; and even those nearest to him, although they thought how sweet was life and how near the chance of saving it, never contradicted the order, as Murray screamed out to save the men in the maintop, and to leave him and his companions to another chance. There stood those weather-beaten seamen, their hair blowing out in the gale, wet, soaked, hungry, jaded, nearly exhausted: but they never opposed the generous offer; on the contrary, Dunlap said, "Galvin's a brave man, and he cannot last much longer. We are safe,—or, at least, safer than he is."

The lad who had thus nobly risked his own life was in no situation to pull about from mast to mast; and having got under the lee of the foretop, he turned his boat round and backed her towards it.

“Quick ! quick !” he said : “ I can only carry two, and I ’m already nearly swamped.”

“ Jump in, sir,” said Munroe to Murray.

“ I jump in ?” replied the youngster : “ never ! I was the one who proposed the boat should go to the maintop, and I will not avail myself of its having come here.”

“ Well said, sir,” ejaculated Dunlap ; “ by G—d you will be the greatest man in the navy : I won’t go—I won’t leave you !”

“ And I hope I may drown if I do !” said Munroe. “ No man shall say Daniel Munroe looked to save himself when his officer refused to leave the wreck. He may go ashore again for me.”

“ Let us put Mr. Weazel and this poor fellow in the boat,” said Murray.

“ Ay, ay, sir,” both responded ; and with the greatest care (for it was ticklish work, and as the boat could only touch the top brim, or rather come below it, for a second, and one instant’s unsteadiness and the people they endeavoured to save would have been drowned,) did these brave fellows lift up Weazel and Waller, and

landing them safely in the boat, gave the gallant youngster three cheers as he pulled towards the shore and left them exposed to all the perils they might have escaped.”*

Those were no common-hearted men who could have cheered the boy as the boat left them again exhausted and in imminent peril : neither should the increased blackness of the clouds be

* This is no fiction—no conjuring up a hero to dress a novel ; the whole is true—every name, with the exception of two, real—every circumstance occurred which has been mentioned ; and the only regret now experienced is, that the name of the boy, who was worth a legion of men, should have escaped unknown. The historian of this calamitous wreck, James in his “*Naval History*,” toiled with all his known perseverance (and if ever a man persevered in the cause of historic truth, James was that man ; his unre-mitted research is perfectly wonderful) to rescue the name of this young hero from oblivion ; but in the greater excitement which followed the loss of the *Tribune*, the poor little fellow’s gallantry was forgotten : for those who looked on were ashamed of their own cowardice, and therefore did not come forward to attest the truth, when they must have been censured for withholding their aid ; and thus he who ought to have been pensioned for life, who should have been held up as one worthy to be emulated, probably died in obscurity, and the fame of all his daring feats may have been usurped by another, who, whispering his own bravery, has risen upon the valour of the boy.

altogether overlooked, for at noon on this day the weather again indicated a continuance of the gale. The eyes which one moment watched the skiff as it rose in security over the wave and surged along to its haven, turned with a saddened apprehension to the squalls settling to windward ; the dark mass of clouds resting as it were upon the horizon, whilst the higher roll of the sea indicated that farther off to windward the gale had increased rather than diminished.

Each man waved his hand as the boat darted round the headland and was in security. Murray felt an elevation of mind as he retraced what he had done. What would his father have said to this noble conduct ? and how would all the faults of the boy be lost in the blaze of an action which the proudest man who ever lived might have rejoiced to have numbered amongst his greatest feats !

“ They are safe,” said Munroe, “ and long before this are piping to dinner ; but Mr. Weazel won’t go to sleep without thinking of us. I recollect when you slipped overboard,

Mr. Murray,—that day when Mr. Hammer-ton went adrift,—he was one of the first in the boat to assist you; and now you've saved him, and like a man too: and this is it, sir,—I must say I should like to shake hands with you."

"Here, my fine fellow," said Murray, holding out a hand; "and here's the other for you, Dunlap; and if I could reach Galvin, he should have them both. Cheer up, lads!" he continued, "the worst is over. Those idle vagabonds will be ashamed to wander up and down there, looking on doing nothing, when that boy gets ashore and tells them that we are here. We must keep up our spirits."

"I wish I had some of the purser's spirits, I know," said Munroe; "and if ever I do get on shore, I'm mistaken if I don't bowse my jib up in memory of this escape."

"You had better be thinking of something else, Munroe," said Dunlap; "for the wind's getting up, and I see no one coming out to lend us a hand."

“But I do,” said Murray; “for there is the youngster again, or his boat.”

Again, sure enough, came the same boat and the same boy: tired as he was, the shout of applause which greeted him as he landed the nearly dead persons prompted him again to brave the perils he had escaped. “What! can’t I get any one to lend me a hand?” said he. Not an answer was made. Some, it is true, were anxious to carry away Weazel and Waller, and all volunteered to take them to the nearest house; but amongst all the people there assembled, and there were plenty of seafaring men amongst them, not one volunteered—not one threw off his coat and offered to stand by a boy of thirteen—not one proposed to launch a larger boat—nor even offered a reward for others to go!

“What! not one out of such a batch as you be?” said the boy. “Then here ’s try it again by myself; and if I ’m capsized, I hope some of you will look to mother, and take care she don’t starve or come to mischief. They

call me a boy in the village," said the daring lad as he sat down in his little boat and got his oars out; "but there is many a man of six foot high, and I see plenty of them, who is afraid to pull round Herring Cove Head; although if it was calm it would be, 'Youngster! get out of the way and make room for a stronger hand.'—Give us a launch there, Bob, will you?" said he to a lad of ten years old; "and don't let any one else but a boy touch the boat. I'm very tired," continued the youngster; "but I won't leave those to die who might have saved themselves, but gave up their chance to those poor helpless fellows I landed—and one of them is only a boy."

"Stop," said an old fellow of about eighty; "I will go with you."

"No, no, daddy," replied the boy; "you may as well stay at home and keep warm. There," said he as he winded his boat, "look at that grey-headed man and be ashamed! There you stand hale and hearty by scores, and you let an old infirm man volunteer, and leave a boy to pull against a gale of wind!—

Well, here goes !” and he forced his little skiff ahead in the smooth water : “ one can but try.”

It seemed at first quite evident, even to those who felt a little inclined to a personal risk, that the boy would never reach the wreck ; but those who saw what he had accomplished had yet some hopes ; for the goodness of human nature at that moment overbalanced the slight satisfaction which would have been felt by all had the brave youngster perished : then indeed they might have found a trifling excuse in the circulation of the anecdote, while they heightened the danger and ridiculed the temerity of the action. The youngster when he landed his half-dead cargo was so fatigued as to be unable to render any assistance ; but the buoyancy of youth rose superior even to physical exhaustion, and reanimated by the cheers which even these heartless cravens had given, he felt what he had accomplished and nobly dared it again.

In Halifax harbour every exertion had been made and failed : the jolly-boat of the Tribune, which had left the ship with one or two

officers who had witnessed the wreck, and who volunteered assistance in the first instance, and before indeed such a calamitous termination had been anticipated, had tried and tried again ; but all in vain, — the sea ran so high near the entrance of the harbour that the boat was washed back, and more than three times nearly swamped. All that gallantry and a noble disdain of life could effect had been done in that quarter ; but it was from Herring Cove alone that any assistance could be given, for it was a kind of soldier's wind, "there and back again," from that point ; the greatest danger was in first rounding the headland—and from this Cove only a boy could be found to face the danger !

It was, as may be conceived, a time of intense anxiety to those in the fore, and the very few left in the main top. The rest had all perished : each sea had taken its victim—each minute had rendered life more precarious. Hunger and thirst, fatigue, anxiety, hope, fear, had all contributed to waste energy, until at last one or two preferred an instant death

to the lingering uncertainty and pain which assailed them. More than one feebly cried, "God bless you, boys, if you live to weather this gale, remember me;" others lifted up their dying voices in prayer, and as if inspired with a courage to overcome the fear of death, dropped designedly into the foaming waters below, and were swept in the boiling surf far far away.

"He does not get much ahead," said Munroe. "Poor fellow! I wish I was at that oar now. If he gets into the surf once ——"

"Then amen," interrupted Murray. "We must hope for a better end to such a gallant spirit as that. I fear he does not near us at all; and to windward it looks very angry."

"I'm in hopes the gale is broken," said Dunlap; "for the clouds have risen considerably, and they don't hang together as much as they did."

"I wish," said Munroe, who in the height of danger could still find time for a bad joke,— "I wish all those fellows on shore were hanging together to those clouds with only slippery

fingers to hold on by. A lazy, cowardly set of curs, to be airing their heels on the top of the cliff, when it's down below they ought to be washing them! I wish I had the mustering of those rogues by divisions, and leave to freshen their ways according to my notion!"

"Good God!" said Murray, "he is swamped!"

"No, sir," said Dunlap, who had watched the boat with almost breathless anxiety; "thank God! not so bad as that. He has given it up and has turned back—he must be tired indeed. He's getting nearer and nearer to the surf—ay, he does not meet it now as he did. There, thank God! he rises again over it: I thought that last sea must have swamped him. He's getting close; he'll do it yet!"—"Hurrah!" they all cried at once; "he has rounded the point and is safe."

CHAPTER XIII.

*Murray's escape from the Wreck. His temptation and fall.—
New Year's Eve in Somersetshire.*

THAT hurrah was sincere—the brave always feel for the brave. Murray, Dunlap, and Munroe felt a secret pleasure in believing the little hero safe, although it might leave them yet without a prospect of relief. Munroe, whose spirits were better and higher than those of his comrades in affliction, was the most vehement in praise of the youngster; and as they sat down in the top to rest themselves after the painful exertion, he said, “There’s many a man been worse off than we are, and yet got saved. I have seen the weather fore-topsail brace give way in a squall, and the lad who was rigging in the top-gallant studding-boom went over-

board, the ship going about ten knots, on a dark night, and yet he has been saved. Something will be done from Halifax,—although, to be sure, it's getting towards dark again, and here we are like so many purser's shirts on a scrubbing-day hung out to dry after being pretty well seasoned with salt-water."

"It's quite impossible," said Murray, "that Galvin can hold out during the night; and who knows that the foremast may not go, and we be all sent adrift?"

"Then it will be fair play and no favour,—we should all have a swim for it," replied Munroe. "Why, Dunlap," continued he, "you seem to have got your figurehead a fixture,—why, you keep your eyes on the same bracings, and brighten up like a chap when it's 'Grog ahoy!'"

"There's a boat coming out of Halifax," cried the seaman with delight: "I saw her just now. There! there! she is again rising over the sea to the left of that bluff point."

"I don't see her," said Murray.

"Let's take a squint, sir," said Munroe: "I'm

more accustomed to a masthead-lookout. There she rises sure enough ! Well, we've time enough to dive below, and get our chest and bags out of the lower deck before she arrives. She'll get here ! — they are not like those Herring Cove cowards. There ! she rides over it like a duck ! — Hold on, Galvin !” said he ; “ there's liberty for shore coming along. Cheer up ! cheer up ! we'll turn into a snug berth to-night yet.”

“ I pray that you may prove a good prophet, Munroe,” said Galvin. “ How cold and wretched I feel ! and yet that boat keeps me in hope—she rides over it famously. I see her now ! and she closes us fast ! Why, there's another just astern of her !”

“ Yes,” said Dunlap, who had never taken his eyes from her, “ I see three more : if the mast and top but keep together for another hour, we shall have a fair chance of being saved. When three or four boats pull together, one cheers the other, and no one likes to be first to give up : they are sure to be good ones, or they would not be there.”

The foretop was the nearest to the boat now fast advancing, and every time she rose upon the sea, Murray turned his eyes to see if Galvin was safe : he appeared quite insensible, and lay stretched upon the maintop, his head apparently jammed in the rigging, which mainly constituted his support. The boat came within hail, and Murray stood forward.

“ Pull first,” he began, “ to the maintop : we can hold on a little longer. But there they are quite exhausted.”

The boat, however, still maintained its course for the foretop : the man who was steering the boat kept waving his hat, as if to cheer the sufferers to hold on longer ; and seeing more people in the foretop, he directed his attention first to them.

“ Not one of us,” said Murray, “ will get into the boat until those in the maintop are saved.”

“ This is no time for talking,” said the steersman ; “ stand by to jump in as the boat rises.” A sea came and washed them to leeward ; the boat was again backed, and again all three

declared they would not get into the boat unless she went first to the maintop. Seeing all persuasion useless, and having three times narrowly escaped, the boat went to the maintop, and by dint of great perseverance and most excellent management they succeeded in saving Galvin and two other men all insensible : they were lifted into the boats by those who availed themselves of a second's lull to jump into the top, when the rare opportunity occurred. By this time another boat had reached the foretop, and the three gallant fellows, the only three who had maintained their senses, jumped into her, Murray insisting on being the last. Some cloaks had been brought out, and the almost naked, shivering son of Sir Hector Murray was the last who would accept of a covering, although from his appearance, and the eagerness of the two seamen to pay him respect, it was evident he the officer was the one who had most nobly behaved himself.

Out of a crew of two hundred and fifty people, twelve only had been saved ; two by the youngster, six by the boats as just related,

and four in the jolly-boat before the ship struck the second time. Amongst those who perished were the captain, and all the lieutenants and midshipmen, with the exception of Weazel and Murray. The master, who was the sad cause of this wholesale calamity, and two hundred and fifteen seamen and marines, perished ; but no blame whatever could attach to the captain.

It is unfair to deny an officer the small remuneration to which he is entitled—nay, it is a stimulus to make masters become pilots,—it is the hope of this reward which makes them toil whilst others sleep, to weary themselves in sounding shoals, and fathoming rocks and difficulties, when their duty on board is done. For one ship which has been lost by their cupidity and ignorance, to use no harsher language, (for in this case it is evident that when the master said he knew the pilotage, he was not speaking the truth,) hundreds of ships and thousands of lives have been saved. How often does it happen that ships in gales of wind are obliged to run for

a harbour out of which, it being a lee-shore, no pilot can come ! It is the knowledge of the pilotage by the master which saves the ship, and which, under his assertion that he is acquainted with the port, warrants the captain in seeking the security of a haven. But no words can be sufficiently strong to censure the conduct of those people of Herring Cove who refused to render any assistance, although stimulated by the successful exertions of a mere boy. Had this wreck occurred on the Goodwin Sands, thousands of those gallant fellows, the Deal boatmen, would have come forward. No surf would have stopped *their* endeavours ; they would have tried, (although we are quite aware they might not have succeeded,) and those who clung to the wreck would have found that their countrymen keenly felt their danger and did not hesitate to risk their own lives to avert it.

How imminent was the peril to the few who survived, may be conceived from the fact that, as the boats pulled towards the shore, the maintop was observed to have been washed away ;

and long before they entered the harbour, the foremast had disappeared ! In one half hour longer, and all but two must have perished.

The generosity of the people of Halifax is well known to all officers of his Majesty's navy : on this occasion two of the principal merchants received the seamen into their houses. Murray was removed to the house of the commissioner, and every attention which experience could prompt and liberality supply was generously afforded. Two, however, died ; but Murray, at the expiration of a week, was seen walking about quite recovered.

Strange it was, that he who felt so much for the life of the youngster as he turned his boat and left him almost without a hope—he who could then cheer him and speak in raptures of his conduct, had now grown proud with his security, and left till to-morrow the duty of inquiring after the boy. Not once even did Murray take the trouble of visiting Herring Cove. But the two seamen who, with Murray, had witnessed the boy's exertions, were no sooner recovered, than they walked over to the

Cove; and having found the youngster, each gave him some trifle which they had saved when wrecked; however, they saw him only once, for men were much wanted in the different ships, and a week after they reached the shore, they were drafted on board different vessels, and were soon separated, perhaps for ever.

It now became a duty, which the commissioner urged upon Murray, to write a letter to his father. The reports of the loss of the frigate had gone to England without the names of those who had been saved. When such a destruction of life was circulated, a parent would feel most anxious to ascertain from his own child the proof beyond contradiction that he had been saved. The little energy which a sailor's life had instilled into Walter was fast ebbing, and day after day he was sinking into his former state. At last the packet arrived; and as the letters for the Tribune were directed to that port, Murray mustered up energy enough to inquire if there were any letters for him, or for the other midshipmen of the Tribune: he particularly asking for those which

might be directed to Hammerton. He received two ; one for himself, and one directed to his unfortunate and still-hated messmate. The blow given by the latter had never been forgotten ; and even now, when he thought him dead, or far beyond his vengeance, he regretted the event, not in sorrow for the supposed sufferer, but because it deprived him of some of that pleasurable feeling arising from meditated revenge.

“ I shall take charge of these two letters,” said he ; “ and as both are in the handwriting of my father, I can mention to him my having received them.”

Had there been any impropriety in giving up Hammerton’s letter, the character which Munroe and Dunlap had spread of Murray would, in all probability, be considered by the postmaster a guarantee that the letter would reach its proper destination. The letter was given and quietly placed in his pocket, whilst that of his father to himself was opened and read. It was a letter of advice, not of credit : it urged Murray to be attentive to the advice

of Hammerton, mentioned Sir Hector's close intimacy with the father, spoke in the highest terms of the little girl, and was very affectionate and very admonitory throughout. The curiosity of the boy soon mastered any honourable feeling he might once have been taught; and when he got into his own room, he began looking at his father's letter to Hammerton.

“ I wonder,” he commenced, “ what that old respectable grey-headed papa of mine can be writing to this lout; of course it is all about me—he can have nothing else to write about; and as Hammerton, by the blessing of Heaven, has long since paid an unexpected visit to the sharks, I may as well learn all that he would have told me from my father himself. There can't be any harm in opening the letter, because if it does contain advice I ought to have the benefit of it,—and if it does not, why I have only shown a laudable desire to be instructed. Then if Hammerton is dead, which in spite of all the captain said is likely enough, he never can see the letter; and if he is not dead, I can remember the con-

tents much better than I can send the original. So that, upon all points of principle and interest, —and money matters rule the world, — I think I had better just take a peep.”

The harbouring of a dishonourable thought is the first step towards the committal of a crime. He who is convinced that he is treading upon slippery ground seeks the surer steps of the bank ; but he who is heedless plunges at once into the mire. The more he then struggles to extricate himself, the deeper he generally sinks : like a man in debt, unless he can give up all at first, it is a hundred to one if he ever retrieves himself—as he pays off with the left hand, he runs in debt with the right ; as a check is given for present payment, a bill at six months is drawn for trifling contingencies. The safest way then is to avoid all temptation.

Hammerton's letter was very unceremoniously opened ; from the envelope fell an enclosure in the handwriting of Hammerton's father ; and although the commissioner had given what money he thought requisite, yet the sight of the fifty pounds in his father's

letter to Hammerton was irresistible. It was the easiest thing in life to say that it came in his own letter,—indeed, why mention Hammerton's at all? It was read, wondered at, skimmed again, concealed. The one from Hammerton's father was retained: in the event of being asked for a letter, there it was. Sir Hector had never written to Hammerton before, why should he now? It is the easiest thing in the world to imagine an excuse, but the most difficult thing in life to lie with consistency. The fifty pounds had cleared away all obstacles, the letter of Hammerton's father was returned to the post-office, but Murray slept not quite so soundly that night as after he had landed and saved Weazel.

In the mean time, the last-named gentleman having recovered from his fatigue, began some of his boyish tricks; and his room being preferred to his company, he was despatched to England to join some other ship, where we propose leaving him to follow the fortunes of our more prominent friends.

New Year's Eve 1799 was kept in all due

form by Sir Hector Murray: the ash and faggot ball, a Somersetshire piece of antiquity, was held at Taunton, and the worthy baronet, who was always partial to old customs, made a point of attending it. In those days, when the hour of midnight of the 31st of December was close at hand, large faggots bound round with ash bindings were placed upon the fire; the company generally sat round this blazing hearth, and at every crack occasioned by the bursting of the bands, the merry guests gave loud hurrahs and quaffed their generous ale: the old year thus departed under a fire of satisfaction, and the new year was ushered in by merry faces and grateful hearts. It was a sort of thanksgiving for favours received—an acknowledgment to Providence with a cheerful countenance of all the blessings which had been bestowed; and far, far better is it thus cheerfully to offer up thanks than, with long, lank, straight hair, to *whine* over the calamities and miseries of existence — to believe merriment a sin and recreation a misdemeanour. Sir Hector was in high force that night; he had

persuaded old Mr. Hammerton to allow Amelia to join in the amusement. The worthy old man never quitted his young charge for a moment, and as the various groups passed and remarked the beauty of the little affectionate girl, Sir Hector felt an inward satisfaction and looked upon her as he would have done upon a daughter. The evening passed, the baronet returned, and the next morning at breakfast he found seated at his table old Mr. Hammerton and his silent interpreter Amelia. The common salutation having been performed, Mr. Hammerton at once began—

“ I have received a letter from Frederic, Sir Hector, and it contains a description of his miraculous escape from the dangers and difficulties by which he was surrounded.”

“ What !” interrupted Sir Hector, “ an action, I suppose ? Victorious of course ? the navy, thank Heaven, are seldom defeated.”

“ Not so, Sir Hector,—worse, ten thousand-fold worse.”

“ Is my son safe ?” interrupted the baronet ; for there was a rumour of the loss of the

Tribune afloat, but so garbled and so contradictory that no one believed it.

“ Yes ; he is safe. But in saving his life, Frederic nearly lost his own. You had better hear the letter.”

Sir Hector manifested a little impatience ; and old Hammerton read the account of the boat, with the danger and deprivations neither heightened nor abbreviated, but a plain straightforward narrative of that which has already been related, and it terminated thus—

“ ‘ In all my sufferings, dearest father, I thought of you and of Amelia : I knew that my death would rob you of your only prop, and Amelia of her only safeguard. I never lifted up my prayers for my own safety without eagerly soliciting that God would endow you with sufficient fortitude to bear up against the calamity should it please Him to shorten my days. My prayer has been heard ; I am yet alive and able, I trust, to work for your maintenance. The first money I can gain shall be transmitted to you ; although I confess at this moment I see but little chance of earn-

ing more than is absolutely necessary for my subsistence. For the present I must remain in this small village, situated on the banks of St. James's River, in the Chesapeake. I had anticipated landing at New York, but we were driven off the coast in a gale and ultimately reached this place. Do not grieve that I am without money, or indeed without raiment; I am spared to you, and I am grateful that I am thus enabled to hope that I may contribute to lighten the load under which you have so long groaned. I shall work my way to England, if I can fall in with some English man-of-war and find some unexpected assistance. I am grateful for the misfortunes I have undergone, as they will teach me hereafter, should chance plunge me into difficulties, not to despair when danger looks the most dreadful, or give up life without a struggle to preserve it. The hand—the bountiful hand of Providence, which has sustained me in this trial, may yet guide and direct me safely to you; and that I may one day be blessed with your blessing, and again see my own dear

affectionate mother and sister, is the unceasing prayer of your ever-dutiful son.

“ ‘ P. S.—I hope young Murray will continue to do and to improve as he did before he slipped overboard. He is a bold, daring, desperate youngster, with one or two little failings which time and a midshipman’s berth will rub off: he is a rough diamond; but rely upon it he will never disgrace his name if chance should throw the Tribune alongside of a force double her strength. I forgot to mention that it was in endeavouring to save the lives of others that he fell overboard himself. It happened on my dear little Amelia’s birthday.’ ”

“ Strange are the ways of Providence, and short-sighted indeed is man ! You remember, Hammerton,” continued Sir Hector, “ that on that very day when your son was thus left to the winds and the waves, we were drinking his health and imploring God to protect him.”

“ You may rely upon it, Sir Hector,” an-

swered Hammerton, "that this meeting of the American ship was the means predestined to save him."

"A fiddlestick, Hammerton!—predestined indeed! Then why did not the first ship save them?"

"Because it was ordained," replied the staunch old man, "that the crew were to be starved and die. You may laugh, Sir Hector, but nothing can shake my faith: I am certain in my own mind that nothing is the effect of chance—everything is ordained, and we walk blindly into the snare we cannot avoid."

"I wonder, Hammerton, would you think so if a man was busily employed cutting your throat with a blunt knife?"

"Certainly I should, Sir Hector; and I should hope that the man enjoying the high situation of finisher of the law would have been predestined to exercise his art upon the murderer. But tell me, sir, have you any tidings of the Tribune?"

"There are reports by hundreds: one, that

she was wrecked in Halifax ; another, that she was blown in the gale off Bermuda and there signaled ; others, that she was seen going into harbour with her number flying ; another, that she had fallen in with a French frigate, and having been dismasted and left a wreck, was seen under jury-mast standing towards the Azores ; but as no two accounts agree, I am quite prepared to believe that the ship is safe enough, and only wish the accident-manufacturers of the newspapers would find some other vessel to lose besides the only one in the navy in which I am personally interested. I was about to remark upon your son's letter. He seems inclined to come home ; I think it is a pity he did not endeavour to get to Halifax ; he might work his way up to New York, and thence he might reach his own ship."

"His poverty, and not his will, consents to the steps he is about to take ;—it certainly would have been the wisest plan, one would have supposed, to have done so."

"I wrote to your son, Hammerton," continued Sir Hector, "and I took care not to make

the letter merely one of advice. Now, indeed, I could have wished him to have received that letter; for, to tell you the truth, I wrote it on little Amelia's birthday, and I sent him a trifling present to let him know the interest I took in my little favourite, and that he participated in my best wishes."

"You have, my dear Sir Hector, placed us all under a load of obligations which we can never return, excepting by a grateful remembrance of them: and now I leave you Frederic's letter to scan over at your leisure, and by the aid of charts and newspapers to make out the situation of the Tribune."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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